

# THE LIVING AGE.

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No. 925.—22 February, 1862.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
1. Plutarch's Lives, . . . . .	<i>Quarterly Review</i> , 435
2. The Yard-Measure Extended to the Stars, . . . . .	<i>Macmillan's Magazine</i> , 451
3. The late Allan Macdonald, . . . . .	<i>N. Y. Evening Post</i> , 456
4. A Strange Way to a Legacy, . . . . .	<i>Chambers's Journal</i> , 457
5. America's Answer to England's Demands, . . . . .	<i>English Papers of 11 Jan.</i> , 467
6. The Whiskey Insurrection, . . . . .	<i>Harper's Magazine</i> , 473

POETRY.—At Port Royal, 1861, 434. Precious Time, 434.

SHORT ARTICLES.—The Late War with England, 450. Witch Stories, 450. Comfort for Bereaved Parents, 456. Mark Lemon's Lectures, 472. Composers charged with Plagiarism, 472.

## NEW BOOKS.

The Rebellion Record. Part XII. Containing Portraits of Gen. M'Call and Gen. Burnside. New York: G. P. Putnam.

CORRECTION.—In No. 920, page 157, is a poem entitled "The Picket Guard," signed E. B., and erroneously credited to the *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*. It was written for *Harper's Weekly*, where it appeared 30 Nov. The author is Mrs. Ethelin Beers, who has published a clever story in *Harper's Magazine* for February.

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## AT PORT ROYAL.—1861.

BY J. G. WHITTIER.

THE tent-lights glimmer on the land,  
The ship-lights on the sea;  
The night wind smooths with drifting sand  
Our track on lone Tybee.

At last our grating keels outside,  
Our good boats forward swing;  
And while we ride the land-locked tide,  
Our negroes row and sing.

For dear the bondman holds his gifts  
Of music and of song:  
The gold that kindly nature sifts  
Among his sands of wrong;

The power to make his toiling days  
And poor home-comforts please;  
The quaint relief of mirth that plays  
With sorrow's minor keys.

Another glow than sunset's fire  
Has filled the west with light,  
Where field and garner, barn and byre  
Are blazing through the night.

The land is wild with fear and hate,  
The rout runs mad and fast;  
From hand to hand, from gate to gate,  
The flaming brand is passed.

The lurid glow falls strong across  
Dark faces broad with smiles;  
Not theirs the terror, hate, and loss  
That fire yon blazing piles.

With ear-strokes timing to their song,  
They weave in simple lays  
The pathos of remembered wrong,  
The hope of better days—

The triumph note that Miriam sung,  
The joy of uncaged birds;  
Softening with Africa's mellow tongue  
Their broken Saxon words.

## [SONG OF THE NEGRO BOATMEN.]

Oh, praise an' tanks! De Lord he come  
To set the people free;  
An' massa tink it day ob doom,  
An' we ob jubilee.

De Lord dat heap de Red Sea waves  
He jus' as 'troug as den;

He say de word: we las' night slaves;  
To-day de Lord's freemen.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,  
We'll hab de rice an' corn;

Oh, nebber you fear, if nebber you hear  
De driver blow his horn!

Ole massa on he trabbles gone;  
Ho leab de land behind;

De Lord's breff blow him furdur on,  
Like corn-shuck in de wind.

We own de hoe, we own de plow,  
We own de hands dat hold.

We sell de pig, we sell de cow,  
But nebber chile be sold.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,  
We'll hab de rice an' corn;

Oh, nebber you fear, if nebber you hear  
De driver blow his horn!

We pray de Lord; he gib us signs

Dat some day we be free;

De norf wind tell it to de pines,

De wild duck to de sea;

We tink it when de church-bell ring,

We dream it in de dream;

De rice bird mean it when he sing,

De eagle when he scream.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We'll hab de rice an' corn;

Oh, nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn!

We know de promise nebber fail,

An' nebber lie de word;

So like de 'postles in de jail,

We waited for de Lord;

An' now he open ebery door,

An' throw away de key;

He tink we lub him so before,

We lub him better free.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

He'll gib de rice an' corn;

So nebber you fear, if nebber you hear,

De driver blow his horn!

So sing our dusky gondoliers;

And with a secret pain,

And smiles that seem akin to tears,

We hear the wild refrain

We dare not share the negro's trust,

Nor yet his hopes deny;

We only know that God is just,

And every wrong shall die.

Rude seems the song; each swarthy face,

Flame-lighted, ruder still:

We start to think that hapless race

Must shape our good or ill;

That laws of changeless justice bind

Oppressor with oppressed;

And close as sin and suffering joined,

We march to fate abreast.

Sing on, poor hearts! your chants shall be

Our sign of blight or bloom—

The Vala-song of liberty,

Or death-rune of our doom!

—Atlantic Monthly.

## PRECIOUS TIME.

WHEN we have passed beyond life's middle  
arch,

With what accelerated speed the years

Seem to flit by us, sowing hopes and fears

As they pursue their never-ceasing march!

But is our wisdom equal to the speed

Which brings us nearer to the shadowy bourn

Whence we must never, never more return?

Alas! each wish is wiser than the deed.

"We take no note of time but from its loss,"

Sang one who reasoned solemnly and well;

And so it is; we make that dowry dress,

Which would be treasure, did we learn to  
quell

Vain dreams and passions. Wisdom's alchemy

Transmutes to priceless gold the moments as  
they fly.

—Chambers's Journal.

J. C. P.

From The Quarterly Review.

*Plutarch's Lives. The Translation called Dryden's, corrected from the Greek and revised by A. W. Clough, sometime Fellow and Tutor of Oriel College, Oxford, and late Professor of the English Language and Literature at University College, London. In five volumes. 1859.*

THE appearance of a new version—as in some sort this is—of the “Lives” of Plutarch, is not only a literary event, but one of no little historical importance. For Plutarch is not merely the first of biographers by right of having produced a great number of biographies of the first class, but he holds a position unique, peculiar, and entirely his own, in modern Europe. We have all “naturalized” the old gentleman, and admitted him to the rights of citizenship, from the Baltic to the Pillars of Hercules. He was a Greek, to be sure, and a Greek no doubt he is still. But as when we think of a Devreux or a Stanley we call him an Englishman, and not a Norman, so, who among the reading public troubles himself to reflect that Plutarch wrote Attic prose of such or such a quality? Scholars know all about it to be sure, as they know that the turkeys of our farmyards came originally from Mexico. Plutarch, however, is not a scholar’s author, but is popular everywhere, as if he were a native. It is as though the drachmas which he carried in his purse on his travels were still current coin in the public markets and exchanges.

Now this, we repeat, is a unique phenomenon. There is no other case of an ancient writer—whether Greek or Latin—becoming as well known in translations as he was in the classical world, or as great modern writers are in the modern one. Neither is there another case of the world’s accepting—as it does with Plutarch’s Lives—all translations with more or less thankfulness. Nor, again, will another instance be found of an ancient writer’s forming so curious a link between his world of thought and those who care for nothing else but what he tells them about or in that world. It is, indeed, wonderful how little translators have yet achieved for the classical men; and this fact might well deserve serious consideration in our age. Pope’s “Homer” is, perhaps, our most popular translation. But is there any other version of an ancient much read? Some

are read, no doubt, as aids to the study of the originals; and some—like our “Horaces”—for the pleasure of seeing how far a delicate and difficult task has been overcome. We have plenty of “cribs,” and we have a few works of art, of which last the Aristophanes of Mr. Frere is (as far as it goes) an unrivalled specimen. Where, however, is the mere stranger to look for translations which shall justify to him the tantalizing and provoking praise he hears on all hands of the antique men? They are not to be found.

We are told by the literary historians that Plutarch was translated into modern Greek in the fourteenth century; and a pious archbishop of Heleno-Pontus had, three centuries earlier, expressed a hope of his eternal salvation conjointly with Plato.\* But we do not find him quoted by our own chroniclers, as the Latin poets and Cicero sometimes are. His real glory begins with the revival of letters, when *Latin* versions of his “Lives” first appeared, and were followed by Greek editions (though not till early in the sixteenth century) both of the “Lives” and the “Morals.” Plutarch, however, was destined to be famous through translations chiefly. The folios of Venice and Florence would get abroad, no doubt, and obtain their share of notice from the scholars who were now laboring like miners in the long-buried cities of antiquity. But the important day for Plutarch and the modern world was that on which the eyes of Jacques Amyot, a French churchman, first fell upon his text. Amyot was born at Melun, of humble parents, in 1513, (just four years before the appearance of the *editio princeps* of the “Lives,” in Greek, at Florence), and studied at Melun, Paris, and Bourges. He held a chair in the last-named town—thanks to the kindness of Margaret, sister of Francis I.; and some early versions which he made from the “Lives” induced that “humane great monarch” to present him to the Abbaye of Belloczane. He went to Venice, attached to an ambassador, where he had no doubt access to important MSS. of his favorite author. He was for some time at the Council of Trent. He received something from each of several successive kings of France, and died a bishop, rich and renowned, in 1583. Such is a brief sum-

\* Fabricius, *Bibl. Græc.*, ed. Harles, v. 156.

mary of the career of a man to whom Plutarch owes his modern fame, and to whom the modern world owes Plutarch. But Amyot's literary merits do not even stop here. He is one of the earliest writers of attractive French prose. He had an immense influence on Montaigne; and, what is still more important, our own countryman, Sir Thomas North, translated from Amyot's translation, and supplied Shakspeare with the groundwork of his "Coriolanus," "Julius Cæsar," and "Antony and Cleopatra." Very few men of letters have done so much for the world as Jacques Amyot, bishop of Auxerre.

Amyot finished the "Lives" before the "Morals," and published them in 1559. It was the year that Mary Stuart's first boy-husband died; and Montaigne was a young gentleman of twenty-six. By and by the "Morals" appeared, and made Montaigne an essayist—so at least he tells us himself; for Plutarch and Seneca, he says, formed him, and he preferred Plutarch of the two. "I draw from them," are his words, "like the Danaïdes, filling and emptying, *sans cesse*." He read no books so much as Plutarch's "Lives" and "Morals," and especially admired the "Comparisons" in the "Lives," "the fidelity and sincerity of which equal their profundity and weight." And he further expressly tells us that he read them in Amyot, "to whom I give the palm over all our French writers, not only for the *naïveté* and purity of his language, but for having had the wisdom to select so worthy a book." Montaigne had, indeed, some personal acquaintance with Amyot; and it is a fact that he quotes Plutarch no less than two hundred times. As every essayist traces his pedigree to Montaigne, what a noble, flourishing tree must that be esteemed which rooted itself and spread its healthy green leaves in Charronea in the first century!

Amyot's folios were popular—strange as popular folio sounds to us. The fact is, that this was the first time that the gentlemen of feudal Europe made the personal acquaintance of the gentlemen of classical Europe. Of course there had always been a vague traditional knowledge of the Roman and Greek heroes. Niebuhr remarks that stories about them used to be read out of Valerius Maximus to the German knights as they sat at dinner; and the mediæval chroniclers

frequently garnish their descriptions with allusions to their mighty names. But all was dark and shadowy about them, and they wore always a *quasi*-feudal garb, just as the Virgin Mary was spoken of as "*a princess of coat-armor*" by our countrywoman Dame Juliana Berners. In Shakspeare's "Troilus and Cressida," with its "*Lord Æneas*," we see the influence of the mediæval view of the ancients; but when he writes from Plutarch, they become different men. It was Amyot that worked this change, by showing them in their real characters as described by an ancient in a civilized age.

We must not be surprised then to hear that Amyot's "Plutarch" was the favorite reading of Henri Quatre, nor that De Retz found only among the "men of Plutarch" parallels to the heroic Montrose. *Homme de Plutarque* became indeed a typical description in France, as we name plants after their discoverers and classifiers. Amyot might be superseded by Dacier, but Plutarch was still read by the generation of Rousseau, who himself sat up till sunrise over the old Bæotian's page. Later still, whatever varnish of classicality adorned the heads of the "revolutionary heroes" seems to have come from the same inexhaustible source. We know that this has been urged against the Plutarchian influence. But the answer is, that without it the "heroes" would have been still more brutal and vulgar than some of them were. The "Gracchus" and "Hampden" of our own Sunday papers are very unlike the children of Cornelia or the landholder of Bucks; they bear the names with much the same appropriateness that negroes do Cæsar and Pompey. It would, however, be too extravagant, we venture to think, to decline studying on that account the historians of the Roman Republic or the English Civil War.

Amyot's folios, we say, were popular; and in time it occurred to an Elizabethan knight, Sir Thomas North, to translate them. Sir Thomas was a collateral ancestor of the Guildford family, being a younger son of Edward, the first Lord North, and studied at Lincoln's Inn in the reign of Philip and Mary. But this is nearly all we know of his personal history. In a late edition of his "Plutarch's Lives," dedicating afresh to Queen Elizabeth, he speaks of "the princely bounties of your blessed hand . . . comfort-



ing and supporting my poor old decaying life"—which looks as if he had not prospered in the world. He made no secret of the source of his translation of the "Lives," which he first published in 1579, for his title-page runs thus: "The Lives of the noble Grecians and Romans, compared together by that grave, learned philosopher and historiographer Plutarch of Cheronea; translated out of Greeke into French by James Amiot, Abbot of Bellozane, Bishop of Auxerre; . . . and out of French into English by Sir Thomas North, Knight." This was honest in Sir Thomas, and is also a sign how highly esteemed Amyot's work had become within twenty years from its publication. He laid the book at the feet of Queen Elizabeth in an epistle breathing all the high-flown and stately loyalty of the day. Some expressions of his testify that he knew the value of biography—that he looked on it as an art preserving the record of great men's lives—that such record may help to produce other great men.

North's "Plutarch" was successful in England, as Amyot's had been in France; and this though (as Mr. Payne Collier remarks) each copy sold for more than five pounds of our money. The first edition, we have said, appeared in 1579; and editions are known of 1595, 1612, and 1631. Who can estimate the influence of such a book on the education of the leading men of the kingdom in those gallant old ages?—or guess how often the growing young cavaliers of the country turned over its venerable pages in the big bay-windows of English country-houses during the warm summer afternoons? The heroes were pagans to be sure—not equal in type to the Christian chivalry, "tender and true," of the northern lands. But in valor—in patriotism—in noble manliness of intellect—in a deep sense of the value of friendship—"Plutarch's men" were not unworthy the cordial study of the descendants of the Crusaders; and besides, such study widened the views of our ancestors, and enlarged their knowledge of politics and society. Other classical authors taught the principles of antiquity—Plutarch showed the persons. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that he has done more than any one writer to create that sort of personal affection for the best men of the antique world which has

always been so common among people of good culture.

Though we cannot expect to enjoy North's "Plutarch" as it was enjoyed in his own time, we cannot open it without perfectly understanding why it was esteemed and liked; and there are men even now who use it in preference to modern translations. Of course, its style is stiff and what we commonly call quaint—with an odd familiar homeliness running through—now its stateliness, and now its pathos. But there is great directness of picturesque force sometimes; and we find not a few touches of that *naïveté* which our French neighbors have so long agreed to assign to Amyot. We might quote the death of Demosthenes, the interview between Augustus and Cleopatra, the last hours of Cicero, as good specimens of North's manner. But a briefer passage shall introduce the worthy old knight to a generation which has forgotten him. It is from the "Pericles," and describes how the cultivated fortitude of the refined Athenian statesman at last "broke down" as he stood beside the corpse of his beloved son:—

"Moreover he lost at that time by the plague the more part of his friends and kinsfolkes, and those specially that did him the greatest pleasure in governing of the State. But all this did never put down his countenance, nor anything abate the greatnesse of his mind, what misfortune soever he had sustained. Neither saw they him weep at any time, nor mourne at the funerals of any of his kinsmen or friends, but at the death of *Paralus*, his yongest and lawfull begotten sonne: for the loss of him alone did onely melt his heart. But as he would have put a garland of flowers upon his head, sorrow did so pierce his heart when he saw his face, that then he burst out in teares and cried amaine: which they never saw him do before all the days of his life."

There is something very affecting in the forcible simplicity of the last sentence. Sometimes this same simplicity has a comic effect;—as when Amyot telling that Cicero was "fort maigre," North renders it "dog-lean;" or when he narrates that Clodius "had a sight of rascals and knaves with him." His use, too, of modern equivalents for the ancient distinctions of rank has a quaint look. Plutarch mentions that Cicero's mother was of good birth, . . . *τὴν μὲν μητέρα . . . γεγονέναι καλῶς* . . . on which Amyot describes her as

of noble family, and North as "a Gentlewoman born." Historians of the language might pick a good deal illustrative of its progress out of this translation.

But we must come to what gives, after all, the greatest hold on posterity to Sir Thomas North—the relation between him and Shakspeare. There is now no doubt of the fact, which Farmer and Warton in the last century helped to make certain and known—which Mr. Knight in our own times judiciously turned to account in his edition—that to North's "Plutarch" we owe Shakspeare's Roman Plays. Just as we have taken ships from the French, and used them as models in our dockyards, so we took "Plutarch's Lives" from them, and used them to enrich our Drama! It is one of the most curious chapters in our literary history.

The dates of these Plays, as everybody knows, are uncertain, though there seems no doubt that they belong to the later period of the great poet's life. But that Shakspeare employed the "Plutarch" of North, the reader shall here see for himself. We transcribe for his perusal a certain portion of North's "Antony," which we have also compared with the corresponding portion of Amyot, whom he closely follows. Let the reader then imagine Shakspeare reading the following passages in his folio North (perhaps, as Mr. Collier suggests, the edition of 1595)—if his veneration will allow him to look over the shoulders of such a man:—

"Therefore when she [Cleopatra] was sent unto by diverse letters both from *Antonius* himself, and also from his friends, she made so light of it and mocked *Antonius* so much, that she disdained to set forward otherwise but to take her barge in the river of Cydnus, the poepe whereof was of gold, the sailes of purple, and the oars of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of the music of flutes, hordboyes, cithernes, vials, and such other instruments as they played upon in the barge. And now for the person of her selfe—she was layed under a pavilion of cloth of gold of tissue, appparelled and attired like the goddesse *Venus* commonly drawne in pictures; and hard by her on either hand of her, pretie, fair boyes appparelled as painters do set forth god *Cupid*, with little fans in their hands, with which they fanned wind upon her. Her Ladies and Gentlewomen, also the fairest of them, were appparelled like the Nymphes *Nereides* (which are the Myrmaides of the waters),

and like the *Graces*; some steering the helme, others tending the tackle and ropes of the barge, out of which there came a wonderfull passing sweete savour of perfumes that perfumed the wharfe's side, pestered with innumerable multitudes of people. Some of them followed the barge all along the river side, others also ran out of the citie to see her coming in. So that, in the end, there ranne such multitudes of people one after another to see her, that *Antonius* was left quite alone in the market-place, in his Imperial seat, to give audience, and there went a rumour in the people's mouthe that the goddesse *Venus* was come to play with the god *Bacchus*, for the generall good of all Asia."

This description—which, by the way, is a good deal expanded from the conciseness of the Greek—is surely a very striking one, and could not but make an impression on Shakspeare's imagination. Now turn to "Antony and Cleopatra," Act 2, Scene 2, and see how he glorifies it with poetry and music, and yet how substantially he adheres to his author:—

ENOBARBUS.

"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten  
gold;

Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars  
were silver.

Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and  
made

The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. For her own  
person,

It beggar'd all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion (cloth of gold, of tissue,  
O'er-picturing that *Venus*, where we see  
The fancy outwork nature; on each side her  
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling *Cupides*,  
With divers-colored fans, whose wind did seem,  
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did  
cool,

And what they undid, did. \* \* \*

Her gentlewomen, like the *Nereides*,  
So many mermaids, tended her silk eyes,  
And made their bends adornings; at the helm  
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle  
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft  
hands,

That yarely frame the office. From the barge  
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense  
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast  
Her people out upon her; and Antony,  
Enthron'd in the market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to the air."

A curious little detail of proof, were such  
needed, that North suggested to Shakspeare

this delicious painting, is supplied by the poet's mention of "mermaids." Of these Gothic personages of course the Greek knew and said nothing,—the modest translators added them to show what the Nereides were. Dryden in his "All for Love" made an unlucky attempt to improve on this same ancient picture; and Mr. Tennyson's Cleopatra in the "Dream of Fair Women" is still the Cleopatra of Plutarch. Three of our greatest poets—imitating while depicting her—have thrown that pearl into their poetic wine.

In "Antony and Cleopatra" Shakspeare has followed Plutarch more exactly (Mr. Hallam thought too exactly) than in the other Roman plays. But whole speeches in "Coriolanus" are directly rendered from North's prose. What, however, is more important is, that the characters are Plutarch's men—how handled we need not say, but still taken from the old biographer, whose biographical instinct (as we shall presently see) was poetic genius in its way. Hence, that air of classicity, of genuine antiquity, breathing about these plays, and distinguishing them indefinitely, though really from "Troilus and Cressida." There the material was chivalrous fiction; and Nestor and Lord Æneas defy each other to prove their mistresses worthy the "splinter of a lance."

We may safely assume that North's was the "Plutarch" of such men as Falkland, Clarendon, and Sydney, whether they could read him with pleasure in the original or not; and that it did no little to form the peculiar classical party which was one element in the Long Parliament. But as the literary school of the Restoration formed itself, and as our prose grew modern, familiar, and more colloquial, North's "Plutarch" went out of fashion. We find editions mentioned in 1657 and 1676; but, a few years afterwards, old Jacob Tonson, the bookseller, thinking that the time had come for a new translation, began his arrangements for one, and announced its approach under the presidency of the great name of Dryden. He had obtained, he said, the assistance of "persons equal to the enterprise, and not only critics in the tongues, but men of known fame and abilities for *style and ornament*." This, we suspect, was a side-blow at the memory of the worthy Sir Thomas North, Knight—as a "dry, old-fashioned wit"—a

sentence passed upon Chaucer in that period by the ingenious Mr. Cowley! The literary fashion then was to sneer at the elder writers of the country much as Horace did at Plautus; and the age, pluming itself on many things, especially plumed itself on being "polite." "Polite Letters"—that was the phrase of our ancestors about this time for what we call light literature.

The great Dryden having hoisted his banner, men were not wanting to serve under it. "His reputation," says Johnson, "was such, that his name was thought necessary to every poetical or literary performance." There worked under the protection of it now several writers whom the world still remembers, including a few whom it still honors. Somers undertook the "Life of Alcibiades," and Evelyn of "Alexander;" "Otho" was translated by Garth; "Solon" and "Pelopidas" by Creech; Charles Boyle, afterwards the unlucky antagonist of Bentley, did "Lyxander." The list further comprises the names of Rycaut, and Rymer, Dr. Stephen Waller—the poet's fourth son and executor,—and Dr. Smalridge. But of the others—though Duke has a page or two in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets"—all memory has, generally speaking, vanished. One name, indeed, has provoked some speculation in the journals of the day since Mr. Clough's new edition appeared. Mr. Clough, in his Appendix to volume fifth, ascribes the "Life of Cicero" to "Thomas Fuller, D.D." Can this have been, a contemporary has asked, the celebrated wit and scholar? There need be no mystery on the subject, for the real name of the translator was "Samuel Fuller, D.D.," as a reference to the original edition will show. He was evidently the Dr. Samuel Fuller of whom there is still extant "A Sermon preached before the king, June 25th, 1682," and the error is one of those not easy to avoid in producing five considerable octavos.

The first volume of Dryden's "Plutarch" appeared in 1683, and the work was completed in 1686. But what Dryden did towards the heavy part of the labor, was little more than a potentate does now-a-days when he turns up the first sod of a new railway. He left to the young Templars and wits about town—the university-men and physicians of literary taste, who made up his *corps*—the task of translation, and himself achieved only

the Epistle-Dedicatory to the Duke of Ormond and the Life of the old biographer. Indeed, while preparing these for the first volume, he was immersed in controversy political and personal—deep in the muddy sea of agitation of Charles II.'s latter years; and, no doubt, only regarded his "Plutarch" as task-work to be executed for so much money.

But, whatever Dryden did, he did with some at least of the characteristics of real power. On the copper coinage, as on the gold coinage of his brain, there is still the head of a king. The Dedication and Life are still Drydenian—hasty, but full of easy, rapid, and careless vigor. In the first he besprinkles the great Tory chief of the Butlers from a perfect fountain of delicious flattery. In the second he shows a real insight into Plutarch's character, which in its kindness and humanity was akin to his own. "There is an air of goodness about him," says Dryden; and makes many acute remarks on biography, which were not so easy to make then as now.

The translation itself has a certain piebald look, the result of its being done by so many "hands"—to use the established term;—is less poetical than North's, and is studded with the colloquialisms, and sometimes even slang expressions, of Charles II.'s time. Probably, too, the Langhorne were right, when it came to their turn, in doubting whether all the translators translated from the original, and in impugning the accuracy of many parts of their work. We shall have to praise our new editor, Mr. Clough, a little further on, for the careful winnowing—the thorough washing, so to speak—which he has bestowed upon it. But still the book is modern English, and has a certain ease and flow about it which it would be absurd to seek in that of the Elizabethan knight, whose fashion of writing has forever passed away. One might prefer the elder version, but it would not the less be impossible to adopt it, even as the basis of a version for general use in our time. The Drydenian one, meanwhile, with less picturesqueness and pathos than North's, is free from the conventional, artificial tone of the Langhorne one. With all its faults, coarseness included, it has the manly freedom and some of the careless graces of that loose-talking, wine-bibbing generation.

Dryden's "Plutarch" now took its turn of popularity, and became the standing English "Plutarch" for nearly a century. There was a second edition in 1716, from old Jacob's shop, the "Shakspeare's Head;" and another—touched up with the help of Dacier's new French version according to the Langhorne—in 1727, which was again supplanted by a third, in 1758. These facts surely indicate a great interest in this writer, whose influence must thus have sunk very generally into the English mind. But in truth, our countrymen appear to have never tired of him, for the same prosperity attended the labors of the brothers Langhorne, whose "Plutarch," published in 1770, ran through edition after edition; latterly, under the editorial care of the accomplished Archdeacon Wrangham. Langhorne's "Plutarch" we may safely pronounce to have been an article of furniture in every decent British household, these three generations back. The brothers John and William Langhorne, have long been forgotten in any other association, though John passed for a poet in his day, when that title was more readily conceded than it is now.

A sentiment of gratitude, mixing itself up with boyish recollections, will prevent most of us from doing any injustice to the Langhorne, whose book has no doubt been the first classical book read by many from real spontaneous curiosity and interest. Mr. Clough, we think, goes too far in summarily characterizing it as "dull and heavy." But it was quite time, nevertheless, that it should be superseded by something better. Besides requiring much correction in particular passages, it is certainly not written in a good style, and we assent to the new editor when he pronounces it "inferior in liveliness" to that predecessor. What an irreverent critic has called a "priggish" look marks it; an air of the lecture-room, less suited to the genial nature of Plutarch himself, than the rival air of the coffee-house. To show how the picturesque element is apt to disappear under such treatment, let us once more turn to the memorable Cleopatra chapter in the Antony. This is what the Langhorne made of the scene on the Cydnus:—

"Though she had received many pressing letters of invitation from Antony and his friends, she held him in such contempt that she by no means took the most expeditious



method of travelling. She sailed down the River Cydnus in a most magnificent galley. The stern was covered with gold, the sails were of purple, and the oars were silver. These in their motions kept time to the music of flutes, pipes, and harps. The queen, in the dress and character of Venus, lay under a canopy embroidered with gold of the most exquisite workmanship; while boys, like painted Cupids, stood fanning her on each side of the sofa. Her maids were of the most distinguished beauty, and, habited like Nereids and Graces, assisted in the steering and management of this vessel. The fragrance of burning incense was diffused along the shores, which were covered with multitudes of people. Some followed the procession, and such numbers went down from the city to see it, that Antony was at last left alone on the tribunal. A rumor was soon spread, that Venus was come to feast with Bacchus for the benefit of Asia."

What a contrast, this description, with its roundabout amplifications and "genteel" conventional phraseology, to that of the quaint, forcible, pictorial Sir Thomas North! All the oriental splendor is tamed and toned down into the effeminate glitter of a modern drawing-room in a novel. It really reads like an account of the expedition from the reporter of a fashionable newspaper.

In spite, then, of the undoubted merits of the Langhorne version, a livelier and more accurate one has long been a *desideratum*.\* But how was the want to be supplied. Mr. Clough, we may suppose, felt that the labor of a translation entirely new was uncalled for, so long as any existing one supplied the materials of a better and more graceful edifice. So he sought and found these in the Drydenian version, of which our opinion has been already given. But any reader who chooses to compare the original form of that version with that which it bears in the work before us, will see that Mr. Clough's has been no trifling labor. He has rebuilt it, so to speak—and with a constant eye to the edifice of the Greek architect of which it is a copy—cleaning here, restoring there, and touching up everywhere. He has improved

the "Alcibiades" of Somers, though the style of Somers was praised in its day by Addison. He has chastened down the exuberant *joyeuseté* (to borrow a favorite word from the patriarch Amyot) of the Restoration, without sacrificing flow or ease. He has, throughout, employed the best recent texts, to secure the exactness of meaning dear to scholarship. And he does not the less deserve to have such labors recognized, because they are labors of a kind which would appear exceedingly distasteful to many men (if many such there were) who had given proofs so decided, as Mr. Clough has, of the possession of original literary genius.

Let us now, however, turn our attention to Plutarch himself. What is known of his personal history is known from incidental notices of himself and his affairs, scattered up and down the voluminous and miscellaneous writings which constitute what are called his Moral Works. These notices have been picked out, like grains of gold, from the mass by many scholars—from "Rualdus" to Donaldson. He was of a good old family in Chæronea; a family not only respectable in local rank, but marked by a turn for letters and philosophy. The year when he first drew breath in the moist Bœotian air is uncertain. But it must have been from A.D. 40 to A.D. 50, for he was a student of philosophy in A.D. 66, when Nero was in Greece, and he talks in the "Antony" of that emperor's having lived in his time. He visited Egypt—he visited Italy, residing for some time and lecturing at Rome. He settled finally at his birthplace, where he spent his old age in literature, philosophy, and the discharge of local duties as archon and priest of Apollo. He lived as long as to A.D. 106—the eighth year of the reign of Trajan, but how much longer is uncertain. He was married happily to a wife of the name of Timoxena, and had several sons who attained manhood and left descendants. On the whole, then, we know more about Plutarch's personal history and surroundings than we do about those of many of his famous contemporaries in literature—Martial, Juvenal, Quintilian, or Suetonius. Excepting the younger Pliny, indeed, there is not a man of letters who flourished during Plutarch's long life, so familiarly known to us,—the great Tacitus himself, the sovereign of them all in genius, included.

\* Mr. George Long published, in 1848, a new translation of thirteen of the *Roman Lives* of Plutarch, selected for their bearing on the later history of the Republic. A detailed notice of these does not fall within our plan; but we gladly testify to the point and spirit which mark them, in common with all the writings of this scholar. Some of the notes are especially curious and suggestive: see particularly those on the *Brutus*.



For the truth is, that though the mere facts which we learn about our biographer are few, they are suggestive ones; while the setting in which we find them—the way in which we are told them—give us really important information about his character and disposition. There was a dash of our modern Pepyses and Boswells about Plutarch—a good-natured egotism and turn for gossip and anecdote. He likes to bring in a story told him by his grandfather Lamprias, or a piece of advice given him by his father, or an adventure of his own; which tendency helped him no doubt to the friendship of Montaigne. He left on record a letter of consolation to his wife on the death of their daughter, little Timoxena, and a very charming and tender letter it is. He tells the world not only that he lived at Chæronea, but why—because he did not wish his own small birthplace to become smaller, “even by one inhabitant.” So too as to the fact of his discharging the office of local magistrate. He dares say people laugh when they see him busy about its details; but these must not be sneered at, says he, if useful to the commonwealth. He had, in fact, all the local, hereditary, family, and personal instincts very strong. He clearly also had a sweet and cheerful temper—eminently social and domestic. He must have been a notable talker; and we should say too did not object to a cup of wine. Accordingly, he much loved the dialogue as a literary form; and he was so inveterate a collector of table-talk, apophthegms, and ana, that many of the stories and sayings of heroes which he gives in the “Lives” had previously done service, and are met with in his other works. It is impossible not to picture him to one’s self crowned with a festal garland, and telling these to his friends—say on Plato’s birthday, for instance, which he always kept as a day at once sacred and joyful. He was abundantly learned in philosophy, of course; but above all, he was rich in the philosophic temper; and had that quick and wide sympathy with all things human which is the right basis of character for a true biographer. Without that, he would never have succeeded equally well in drawing Antony and Coriolanus,—the brilliant Athenian Alcibiades, and the shrewd old Roman of the antique school, the first Cato.

This unabated cheerfulness of Plutarch—

in such an age—is a very noteworthy phenomenon. For we are to remember that he was old enough to know, and even to see, the abominable life of Rome during the worst part of the first century. He was a student under Nero—seems to have been in Rome itself under Domitian—and, whether or no, was certainly contemporary, during the freshest part of his life, with that splendid, ghastly, sinful society, of which the Roman writers have left a picture so brilliant and so terrible. The martyrdom of the Stoic philosophers—the exile and murder of the brave and wise—the bloody spectacles of the Circus, with its shivering wretches flung in among wild beasts—the prosperous scoundrels of servile birth carried by in their rich litters—the imperial harlots drawn by silver-shod mules—all such things as these were to Plutarch what to our generation were the Reform Bill, the first appearance of Mr. Dickens’ novels, or the opening of the new Italian Opera in Covent Garden. All that darkened the soul of Tacitus and maddened the heart of Juvenal presented itself to the young Chæronean on his first Italian tour. And then too he was a Greek—a native of that rich old Bœotia which—let the Attic wits laugh as they pleased—had produced Pindar and Epaminondas, but where now the meanest tool of the Roman despot was more potent than the descendant of native heroes and gods. He was a man of letters and a philosopher also; and in these capacities were there not some additional miseries for him? Was there not the misery of witnessing the degradation of such of his own countrymen—and they were many—as profaned those titles—*aretologi*, diners-out, buffoons, legacy-hunters, parasites, who lived on the corruption of the city’s luxury like the baser fish of the Tiber? Was there not too the hack jeer of the upstarts of the time at all Greeks as “Greeklings,” and all philosophers as babblers, to be borne? Yet Plutarch lived through whatever of public or private wickedness and wretchedness he saw, with unspoiled temper, and the absence of any deep tinge of melancholy from his writings makes itself markedly felt. He lived as completely under the influence of books as the Younger Pliny, and was forever thinking of the Past, without being made miserable by the contrasts which it forced upon him. Indeed, in his “Political Precepts,”

he indulges in a dry little laugh at those among his Greek contemporaries who kept harping on old Greek glories which they could never imitate. He wishes that they would try to renew some of the better qualities of the ancients—their moderation and self-denial, for instance—but thinks that Marathon and Plataea may at this time of day be left to the schools of the Sophists. The passage is worth remembering,\* since one charge against Plutarch has been an undue and mistaken admiration of antiquity to the exclusion of all sense of the difference of conditions between different ages.†

Mr. Clough has some observations, in his Preface, on Plutarch's relation to the bad imperial reigns, which the reader will find especially interesting at this particular point which we have reached:—

"It may be said, too, perhaps not untruly, that the Latin, the metropolitan writers less faithfully represent the general spirit and character of the times, than what came from the pen of a simple Beotian provincial, writing in a more universal language, and unwarped by the strong local reminiscences of the old home of the Senate and the Republic. Tacitus and Juvenal have more, perhaps, of the 'antique Roman' than of the citizen of the great Mediterranean Empire. The evils of the imperial government, as felt in the capital city, are depicted in the Roman prose and verse more vividly and more vehemently than suits a general representation of the state of the imperial world, even under the rule of Domitian himself."

With Plutarch's philosophy, as a system, we are not particularly concerned on this occasion. He takes his proper place among the Neo-Platonists, and has been defined as "a Platonist tinctured with Orientalism."‡ But it does behoove us to know that, though philosophy did not give him his genius for biography, it gave him the motive for applying it, and that there is much in his philosophy which is noble and wise. He believed with all his heart—and it was a warm heart—in the Divine government of the world, in Providence, and in Immortality. He believed most fervently that, in the

long run, Good triumphed in the universe; and that, relying on so mighty a truth, a man ought ever to be ready to bear all and lose all for the sake of what his conscience and knowledge taught him to be right. Here, then, are the moral bases of Plutarch as an historian of the doings of men. That he knew anything of Christianity there is no evidence, but he preached the best principles accessible to human reason before Christianity was revealed. He rejected the more superstitious parts of his own faith, and detested the foreign additions which made it worse; and, if he officiated as a priest of Apollo, we know that he would do this in no blind, grovelling way. He loved Grecian traditions too well not to respect the old ceremonies of Grecian worship, and these would symbolize to him the higher ideas which his philosophy taught him, besides serving him as means for keeping alive in the people that reverence for the Unseen and Eternal without which man is meaner than the brutes. No generous reader but will think kindly of the old philosopher, the child of an age of buffoons and revellers, when he pictures him far away from the hum and splendor of Rome, going through the antique rites of the temple at Delphi, in the rocky and secluded valley which still thrills the traveller with its loneliness. Without a kindly heart for such things, would he ever have represented so well to us the older Greek life at all?

There is no doubt, we repeat, that it was a philosophical motive which first set Plutarch writing "Lives." "I began them," he says *more suo*, "for the benefit of others, and continue them for my own" (*Timoleon*). "I am not writing histories," he tells us, in a more famous passage, "but Lives." He meant, in fact, to exhibit the great men of the old times and preach upon them: to point a moral upon their virtues or their shortcomings for the benefit of well-meaning people generally. He had no literary object in view, strictly speaking, but one which he thought much higher. The philosophical schools of antiquity did not esteem literature, *as such*, so greatly as some may think. In the opening of his "Pericles," Plutarch lets us see very clearly his feeling on the point. He observes there that:—

"No generous or ingenuous young man

\* See it in the *Πολιτικά Παραγγέλματα*, Op., ed. Reiske, ix. 243.

† Lord Macaulay pushes this too far in his Essay (not reprinted) on "History."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1828.

‡ Donaldson's "History of Greek Literature," iii. 178-182.

'would' feel induced by his pleasure in their poems to wish to be an Anacreon, or Philotas, or Archilochus. For it does not necessarily follow," he proceeds, "that if a piece of work please for its gracefulness, therefore he that wrought it deserves our admiration. . . . But virtue, by the bare statement of its actions, can so affect men's minds as to create at once both admiration of the things done and desire to imitate them. . . . And so, we have thought fit to spend our time and pains in writing of the lives of famous persons." — *Clough*, i. 320.

In order to do justice to our biographer, then, we must always remember that this was his point of view, and that he would have esteemed criticism of his mere execution a very secondary matter. We must remember, also, that the writing his *Lives* in parallels was an essential part of his moral plan, and that the ancients, in quoting him, quoted the parallels and not the single *Lives*: talking of Plutarch's "Pelopidas and Marcellus," Plutarch's "Aristides and Cato" (each of which made a *book*), and so with the rest. Obviously, when there were two persons to compare, a moral could be twice as well pointed and enforced,—not to mention that the opportunity was excellent of reviving the glory of the old Greeks by placing them on an equality with the men whose race still governed the world in the writer's time. Again, the classifying and coupling men in this way implied a previous conception of the character common to both: the conception of an idea or whole as material for each "book," to form which was evidently a philosopher's task. Hence the *unity* of Plutarch's great work, one of its chief titles to immortality. Every hero is at once measured by a moral standard and put in relation with some other hero. Over the whole performance a planning, creating spirit moves and breathes. Every *Life* helps you to understand and appreciate every other *Life*; each Greek is a Greek, and each Roman a Roman, but both are more perfectly understood by the opposition. The value of this use of parallelism—which Plutarch has contrived to identify with his name—extends over many fields of intellectual inquiry, and might, we think, be beneficially employed still.

We cannot indeed assert that equal judgment is shown by Plutarch in all his selections of men for comparison. Sometimes he

chooses a pair for their resemblance of character, and sometimes rather for a similarity in their destinies. Thus he joins Pelopidas and Marcellus because they were "both great men who fell by their own rashness"—the common quality of these warriors. But surely his motive for coupling Alcibiades and Coriolanus was only that both quarrelled with their own states, since they were quite unlike in disposition, and belonged to totally different kinds of life and civilization. Caesar and Alexander came naturally together to him, each being a conqueror representing also the cultivated intellect and ripe or over-ripe development of his time. Demosthenes and Cicero met by an irresistible affinity—in endowments, position, and fate—for his purposes. But if he was not always so happy, we must remember the difficulty of his task, seeing that, besides the infinite variety of human character, every man is more or less at the mercy of the conditions under which he finds himself placed. All things considered—his comparative unacquaintance with things Roman included—we are rather surprised that Plutarch has done so wonderfully well. How happily the austere virtue of Aristides sets off that of Cato the Elder! How well Phocion and the Younger Cato—the two un-genially virtuous men (so to speak) of decadent ages, both sarcastic reformers, and failing in their reforms—suit each other!

Of course we must say something here of the ancient charge against Plutarch, that in working out these parallels he is unduly favorable to his countrymen. Who can help liking his own people better than those of another country? But try Plutarch fairly. Compare his treatment of the Romans with that of the English by the French, or the French by the English writers—nay, with that of a Tory hero by a Whig historian, and *vice versa*! Consider the circumstances under which his judgments had to be delivered, subject as he was to any *proconsul* or *procurator* appointed by a Roman emperor! We are pretty confident that from such a thorough-going examination Plutarch would emerge not only an honest but a generous man. In his "Comparison of Fabius with Pericles," he says, "No action of Pericles can be compared to that memorable rescue of Minucius." In "Demosthenes and Cicero" he gives Cicero the preference in almost

every point of character, except where he rebukes his vanity. In "Lysander and Sylla" he frankly pronounces the achievements of Sylla "beyond compare." He condemns the private life of Alcibiades, yet is not harsh in his narrative of that of Antony. And, when he "sums up" between Cimon and Lucullus, he even goes so far as to say that if Cimon had lived to retire into an easy old age, *he* might have been luxurious and self-indulgent, too!

Has he not, we would now ask, been hardly dealt with in the matter of his authority as an historian? Critics have handled him very roughly on this score. They say that he contradicts himself sometimes; that he is too fond of a good story (Mitford's standing objection); that his military narratives are incorrect or imperfect; that he is not, in short, a severe, elaborate, and perfectly trustworthy historical writer. Now, considering that he has left fifty biographies,\* ranging over the events of some thirteen hundred years,—from Theseus downwards,—it would indeed be madness to expect from him unvarying accuracy of detail. Nor did he ever intend to be an original historian, like his contemporary Tacitus—to be a fountain of authority, that is, to succeeding ages. He assumes that you know the general facts, and only aspires to show you the men, in his capacity of a diactic and moralizing biographer. He draws you the figures and actions of history, as it were, in the Bayeux tapestry, with running titles more copious and instructive than those of that quaint old work of art, but he does not pretend to supersede the chroniclers. These are his portraits with his remarks; are they *like*? We take it that *that* is the question for the critic of Plutarch. He is vague in his accounts of Scortorius' campaigns. Very true. But does he not, in spite of this, delineate the man Scortorius faithfully? He repeats some dubious anecdotes of Pericles; yet, may we not suppose that Pericles was much such a person as he, *on the whole*, would have us think him to be? Observe, too, that there is never

a trace of malignity perceptible in Plutarch, whatever anecdotes he may be telling. If he errs, it is from over-fondness for stories. He knew that they illustrated character, and did not, perhaps, always sufficiently remember that no stories at all about a man would be better than inexact ones. Yet he constantly shows his honesty of intention by qualifying them with, "as Hermippus says,"—or, "so Theopompus reports," etc. And this way he has of making a confidant of the reader helps to cement his familiarity with one. We get to know, and even to relish his weak points, just as we are rather amused than bored by the occasional digressions on physics and such subjects, which he winds up so naively with, "but enough of this"—or, "this, however, rather belongs to another occasion!" The fact is that he wrote the "Lives" in his latter years, under the mild sway of Trajan, and that he must be excused for occasional garrulity. It was a Greek weakness from which not even philosophers were exempt.

But we must not fancy either that the "Lives" have not high historical value apart from their biographical charm. Do we ever meet a modern work on Greece or Rome for some part of which Plutarch is not a leading authority? If, as Byron says,—

"Mitford in the nineteenth century,  
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek  
the lie,"

—does not his frequent reference to him betray his sense of his importance? We encounter his name in the foot-notes of the lucid page of Grote, and Bishop Thirlwall says that he is always entitled to attention. His reading is admitted by all men (Niebuhr included, though his tone is patronizing) to have been immense. Parts of "Antony"—one of his best biographies—are indispensable to Roman history. He used and he quotes many a work which sunk long ago under the waves of time—the *Memoirs of Sylla and Augustus* and *Dellius* (our old friend "*moriture Delli*") included,—for, as Hereen remarks in his valuable treatise,\* he seems always to have used autobiographical works when he had an opportunity. Now, if being—as he admits—no first-rate Latin scholar, he still refers to so many Latin au-

\* Forty-six arranged in parallels, and four (*Artaferzes, Aratus, Galba, Otho*) which stand by themselves, and did not originally belong to this collection. Several parallel lives are lost, of which, Epaminondas and Scipio the Younger must be deeply regretted. Eight "Comparisons" are missing, and the order in which the lives now stand is not the original one.

\* *De Fontibus et Auctoritate Vit. Par. Plutarchi*. Göttingen, 1820.



thors as we find him citing, what may we not suppose to have been his general information? Undoubtedly we are not always in a position to test him. But in some cases we are. We have, for example, as abundant material for judging of Cicero's real character as that of any great historical personage. Now, we are among those who think with respect and kindness of that great man; and we should be quite content to accept, generally and substantially, Plutarch's account of his career and disposition.

Suppose, however, that we now turn to that feature of Plutarch which admits of less controversy—to which he owes his peculiar moral value and widespread European fame—to his genius as a biographer. *There* he reigns supreme. A certain eye for the seizure and presentation in a "Life" of a great personality was to him what dramatic genius was to Shakspeare, or the faculty for telling a story to Livy. It was an instinct, working in him all his days, and finding him incessant employment in his old age. He fancied—the good man—that he was only a philosophical teacher, helping the new generation to be good boys. In reality he was as much a genius and an artist as any of his countrymen who helped to build or adorn the Parthenon. Perhaps he was in great measure unconscious of this—and so much the better.

All genius of course rests on a moral basis, and is mixed up for good or evil with the personal character. In Plutarch's case a heartfelt reverence for the great and the good was blended with a human sympathy which made him long to know great and good men familiarly—long to be able to *connect* that which was transcendent and heroic in them with that which they shared with everyday mankind. Here was Plutarch's object—not to recognize nobleness only, which all healthy, clear-sighted minds do—not to gather personal and private details only, which the tattler and gossip do after their kind—no, but to seize the relation between them! He wanted to make the little things about a hero throw light on the great things about him. He yearned to know him in his entirety. Why he should have been able to achieve the result he arrived at in literature is Nature's secret, very jealously kept. But this was his ideal; and this constitutes his originality. There are biographers who

deal with the hero, and biographers who deal with the man. But Plutarch is the representative of ideal biography, for he delineates both in one. Even if a writer should appear who did the work better, he could not improve on the thought—which ought to secure Plutarch a place among the creative spirits of the world. It is no exaggeration to say, that his faculty was Shakspearian in kind, if not in degree; and when Shakspeare went, as we have seen, to the old Greek for material, he did not only find marble there, he found statues ready hewn. The poet owes nearly as much to the biographer as the biographer to the poet.

The next thing we would point out is, that Plutarch keeps his familiar details in subordination. He first thinks of his great man as a great man before busying himself with the domestic touches—highly as he values them—necessary to the full portraiture. So his hero's dignity loses nothing, which is a very important consideration. A writer of mean parts may be "graphic" by working up little items of description with care; but to seize a character or event as a whole, and only use details as accessories, requires high intellect. When you close your "Plutarch," after reading, say his "Themistocles," your first thought is of the complete character—daring, subtle, generous, but with a dash of something ostentatious or theatrical about it. You do not reflect how skilfully this is *done*, but how lifelike it is. Only afterwards, and on further examination, do you perceive how admirably the *minutiae*—trifling each in itself—have fallen into their proper places. That as a schoolboy he was ambitious and prominent among his fellows—that "the trophy of Miltiades would not let him sleep"—his pointed sayings—the dog that swims alongside one of the galleys when Athens takes to the sea—Xerxes' gold chair—and such things, are distributed so judiciously through the narrative that they give it animation and reality without being obtrusive.

When once, however, we have recognized his grasp of character in all its width and variety, we may indulge ourselves, not improperly, in studying the charm of his handling of details. The quantity of anecdotes and *bons-mots* which he has accumulated in these "Lives" is wonderful. He had a passion for them, and occasionally—with a weakness seen in other old gentlemen—tells them



over and over again. He follows his heroes from school to public life, and home again—peeps into their family circle, carries with them over the wine, watches how they bear prosperity and misfortune, and lingers by their death-beds, or bends down to them as they lie dying on the battle-field, to catch their last words, and see how they face their last trial. Everything, he thinks, that a man can say or do shows character; and why write biography if not completely? As he is always reverent and kindly, he never offends by this copiousness; while his subjects are personages of such historical importance, that hardly anything they do or say can seem quite trivial.

The sayings which Plutarch records are even more welcome than his anecdotes, and have many of them passed into familiar use in modern times. It completes the character of a great man if he talks greatly, as many of Plutarch's men did; and, whether or no, we are better acquainted with him by having specimens of his familiar speech. It is worth remarking too that the men of action have usually been better talkers than the men of letters—or were so at least in antiquity. The latter might *discourse* more richly in conversation, but did not equal the soldiers and statesmen in those brief, terse, solid *dicta* which strike like cannon-shot, being propelled indeed by the explosive force of a great individuality. Pompey's exclamation that if he stamped his foot in any part of Italy troops would spring up, and the "*Cæsarem vehis!*" of his greater rival and conqueror, affect one more than those brilliant pleasantries of Cicero, which Plutarch has preserved to the number, if we recollect right, of nineteen. We would note too that the sayings attributed to his heroes by Plutarch, generally bear intrinsic evidence of their genuineness, and harmonize with the descriptions he gives of their habits of mind and thought. Thus, those of Themistocles are showy and splendid; of Phocion, curt and sharp; of the Elder Cato, grave and shrewdly humorous. Plutarch is indeed, here and elsewhere one of our chief authorities for the table-talk of the ancients.

While his attention to the particulars just mentioned does much for the fulness and richness, the body and color, of his portraiture, Plutarch is equally to be praised for his backgrounds—for the scenery and access-

ories of his art. He gives fine delineations of the circumstances under which his men acted or suffered, and so stamps the reality of his narrative on the reader's imagination and memory. As specimens of these, we would point to the rejoicings at Naples when Pompey recovered from his illness; but especially to the death-scenes of Demosthenes, Cicero, and the younger Cato. The figure of the Greek orator staggering from the altar of the Temple of Neptune, with the poison seizing his vitals, haunts the memory like a ghost. That of the Roman orator, trying, while he is being hunted for his life, to snatch a little rest, and the story how the crows swarmed ominously round the house and into the very chamber, are not less impressive; while, whose feelings are not stirred strangely, on reading of the last night which the stoic of Utica spent alive, and how "the birds began to sing" as he rose to bare his breast to the sword? A gentle sensibility to all that is picturesque, and especially to whatever is tender and melancholy, makes much of the charm of Plutarch. He is not a writer who owes much to *style* in its strict and limited sense, or who is ever compared in that respect to the masters of Attic prose. The old critics seem all agreed that his "diction" is "*duriuscula*." Dr. Donaldson—lately lost, alas! from our scanty band of real scholars—pronounces that "he is not a good writer of Greek." His handling of admirable material on a free broad scale is his great merit, though of course there are flashes of genius where the expression, too, makes itself remarkable. He was a philosopher with his head full of great ideas, and an artist with his heart full of the images of mighty men—men who were the flower of two great races.\* Nothing tawdry, nothing effeminate, nothing petty attracted him. If he liked trifles, it was only when they were characteristic of men about whom everything was interesting, or when their mention relieved his sunny and affectionate nature after those serious and lofty studies which were the business of his life.

Vivid moral portraiture—this was Plutarch's great object and his successful

\* Of forty-nine Greeks and Romans (the entire number of *Lives*, excluding *Artaxerxes*) whom he has celebrated, at least thirty-nine were of the royal, noble, or ancient families of their respective countries; a strong testimony to the worth of the classic aristocracies.

achievement. We do not think he aimed at any special triumph as a writer, with this or the other political view. He wanted great men with marked characters, that they might illustrate general moral ideas—the best a pagan knew. He found them in different countries, and in different causes.

The superiority of Plutarch as a writer of "Lives" over any surviving classic is undoubted. Cornelius Nepos is an acute and elegant biographer, but his "Lives" are not portraits. Suetonius, who flourished in Plutarch's old age, has likewise high merit. He is a lively and forcible narrator, and brings together an immense deal of material, not only solid and valuable, but curious, minute, and piquant, about his Cæsars. Yet the inferiority of his method—of classing successively by themselves the wars, political acts, tastes, or personal habits of the men—is very marked. His "Lives" lack unity, and the writer himself lacked the eye for dramatic character and poetic delineation of Plutarch. We know, in short, only one ancient biography with which it would not be a kind of degradation to Plutarch to compel him to compete. Of course, we are thinking of the "Agricola" of his great contemporary Tacitus. The profundity and subtlety, the deep tragic pathos relieved by the most brilliant and piercing wit of that immortal historian, must undoubtedly place him above the mark of the humbler though not less genuine artist of Chæronea. He is a more potent nature altogether, as wine is stronger than milk; and Plutarch must give way before him, as his countrymen in that age before the eagles of the empire. But though there is a condensed force about the "Agricola," with its weighty aphorisms and burning epigrams, which Plutarch cannot rival, we may still doubt if he is not as successful in his portraiture as Tacitus, though in a less impressive and, on the whole, inferior style: at all events, he is infinitely more fit for popular reading. His amiability gives him a hold on the general heart like Goldsmith. He is above no reader, and below no reader. And as he connects the studies of the public with those of the scholar, so he brings together the modern and ancient worlds by showing how much that is good and noble is common to both.

The time is now come to consider how the example of Plutarch as a biographer has

affected the art of biography in modern times. His general influence, allowing for the many successful translations of his "Lives," has, no doubt, been very great on the English as on other literatures. Probably every English biographer has known something of him, and learned something from him. And it is a singular testimony to his merit, that so few should have produced any "Lives" that will bear the least comparison with his.

It is not a hopeful sign for our Biography that every dunce should think himself entitled to sneer at Boswell for no other reason than that he had a transcendent veneration for one of the greatest and best men this country ever produced. Boswell was, no doubt, an inferior man to Plutarch, but he had quite enough in common with him to deserve that the likeness between them should be pointed out. A hearty reverence for worth was the *primum mobile* of literary exertions in both. The virtues of these great men, Plutarch says—

"serve me as a sort of looking-glass, in which I may see how to adjust and adorn my own life. Indeed, it can be compared to nothing but daily living and associating together; we receive, as it were, in our inquiry, and entertain each successive guest, . . . and select from their actions all that is noblest and worthiest to know.

'Ah, and what greater pleasure could one have?'

or, what more effective means to one's moral improvement? Democritus tells us we ought to pray that of the phantasms appearing in the circumambient air, such may present themselves to us as are propitious, and that we may rather see those that are agreeable to our natures and are good, than the evil and unfortunate; which is simply introducing into philosophy a doctrine untrue in itself, and leading to endless superstitions. My method, on the contrary, is, by the study of history, and by the familiarity acquired in writing, to habituate my memory to receive and retain images of the best and worthiest characters."

Boswell, with all his weaknesses, might honestly have professed as true a love of greatness as the Greek. But their resemblance was more marked in the homelier qualities. They both loved talk and stories, and had strong personal and local attachments. A writer might have greater parts

than either of them, and not produce half their effect, just for want of their peculiar disposition. And we may be perfectly sure of one thing, that the kind of man utterly unfit for biography is the model "clever man," full of the "enlightened epoch" notions, so fashionable just now. The whole moral being of such a man would have to be changed before he could loyally picture, at once in its majesty and its simplicity, a great character of the past. Fulke Greville's romantic friendship, Izaak Walton's old-fashioned tenderness, are out of his range. But there will be no high things done in biography till we learn to revive that gentle old spirit, and apply it in forms suitable to our own age. Talent alone never produced a great "Life," and never will. The "Agricola" ends in a burst of passionate affection like a choral wail. Johnson's "Life of Savage" is full of his friendship for the unlucky reprobate whose society had cheered his solitude and poverty in his early London days.

Hoping, however, that the truths here expressed may one day bear literary fruit, what else may we learn in biography from Plutarch's example? His method of writing lives in "parallels" it would be very difficult to imitate, though that feature of his plan should not be abandoned without reluctance. His copious employment of detail there is a growing disposition to appreciate, to an extent which we perceive is already producing a reaction. Ever since the "Waverley Novels" appeared there has been a set in favor of a dramatic and picturesque treatment of history. There was nothing new in the tendency, as the superiority of the older over the newer translations of Plutarch, in such respect, might alone serve to convince us. The feeling for reality and completeness in literary art is, of course, substantially sound. Let us, by all means, have past ages reproduced with all their circumstances and conditions if possible, not only their principles and ideas and actions, but manners, costume, furniture, and ornaments. Let the classic man sacrifice in his garland, and the feudal man bear mass in his mail. On all this, it is, in the present temper of the reading world, superfluous to insist. But let us bear in mind also, that Plutarch never overdoes it, and yet that it may be overdone. It is not the deepest fact about the seventeenth century that people wore

steeple-hats, and went out to fight in buff jerkins, though such details assist one in getting familiar with things more important.

Again, we may learn from Plutarch that good biographies are not necessarily long. Nine or ten of his go conveniently into an octavo volume. This merit he shared with the ancients generally. The "Agricola" is a pretty little pamphlet. The "Cæsars," in Suetonius, are as portable as a handful of their coins. Now, this is a mighty advantage, for a good book that is short, will be read far oftener than a good book that is long. Our own earlier "Lives"—those, for instance, which Wordsworth calls

"Satellites burning in a lucid ring"

Around meek Walton's heavenly memory," are of moderate as well as graceful proportions. The bulk of Middleton's "Cicero" is accounted for by the extent of the subject. Johnson is uniformly reasonable; his "Milton" occupies eighty-five and his "Dryden" a hundred and eighteen pages. But it would not be difficult to point to "Lives" of men as inferior to Milton or Dryden as the biographers themselves to Johnson, filling six and ten times the space.

But, after all, Plutarch will be read by thousands who care nothing for the art of biography, and to whom critical disquisitions on the subject can be little attractive. It is time to return to them, before bidding him farewell. There is now no danger of his influence being otherwise than good. The "classical republican" is extinct, or, where he survives, begins, we suspect, to see that there were nobler things in antiquity than the dagger of Brutus. We now learn from classical history just the opposite lessons to those which it was once thought to teach; while the revolutionary movement in Europe has thrown off the toga, finally, and sticks to the blouse, which is its more appropriate garment. On the other hand, a growing sense among the best English youth of the value of our history as the basis of our political liberties prevents us from apprehending any spurious classicism from the influence of the ancients. Much as there is to learn from the Greeks and Romans, their special influence is not likely to disturb the minds of statesmen and potentates again. Meanwhile, the charm of Plutarch as a writer remains unbroken. He will be read for many an age, under the influence of that

"nature" which makes Greek and Roman "kin" to Englishman and Scot. Many a reader will secretly ask himself what *he*—living in a brighter light of knowledge—ought to be, when antique "heathens" and "pagans" could live and die like Plutarch's men. Nor will he forget to thank the memory of the wise, kind-hearted old biographer himself.

Plutarch, we repeat, will be read, and read, we think, among ourselves, for the future, in the version of Mr. Clough. We have given that version our cordial praise before, and shall only add that it is brought before the world in a way which fits it admirably for general use. The print is clear and large; the paper good; and there are excellent and copious indexes.

**THE LATE WAR WITH ENGLAND.**—The way is long to England and back, and we are fatigued with waiting to learn how they receive the news of our action on the "Trent" case. If the transatlantic telegraph were a living thing, we should have known much sooner, but possibly would have felt not much better or worse about it ourselves. In that case, however, the British Government could hardly have avoided asking an explanation, and a reasonably amicable adjustment of the whole case at the outset; but to have so settled the matter would have deprived us of the edifying display of hostility and hate in which English journals have for many weeks indulged. To look at these hostile demonstrations from our present light, gives them a singularly offensive and disgusting appearance. Needless rage and unavailing malignity stand in them wholly unrelieved by any reasonable justification. It is like some attempts we have seen to get up a personal quarrel with no occasion for rousing the natural anger of either party. Men will, in such cases, often indulge in language purposely excessive and abusive, endeavoring to make up for want of a case by an affectation of extreme excitement; but the assailed party and the spectators then look on with precisely the feelings we now have at the war threats in England.

When the war fever does subside with them, under the effect of this "Trent" rendition, there will come a calm in England which will last until after the time of cotton planting. There is significance in this fact. Speculators hold cotton abroad in the hope that one American crop will be lost. They are moving to the purchase of cotton in all the ends of the earth in the same view. They now have a large amount of money invested in these operations, which money would be jeopardized by a too sudden restoration of the American market. By the time the 19th of April returns, the day for successful planting will have gone by, and as that is about the time that our standard will again wave over New Orleans, it must be calculated that at least three-fourths of the next cotton crop is lost—cannot be planted, and therefore cannot be raised for Liverpool. Then, let it be remembered, the interest of the English manufacturer will cease to demand an opening of our ports at the risk of war.

Therefore it may be that the absence of a telegraph, and the happy capture of the "Trent,"

will together tide us over the great European danger, and bring us to a reduction of the rebellion undisturbed by foreign intervention. The "Trent" seizure was a special excitant, a small war intended to bring on and to subsequently cure a fever which might otherwise have proved dangerous. It was a case of vaccinated small-pox, controllable under the preliminary care and dieting bestowed, and serving to avert the natural taking which would have had a more violent run, and might have proved fatal. All national excitements have many of the characteristics of fevers, and it is not easy to follow one attack with another of the same sort in the same year. In the year's relief thus granted us, it is highly probable that we can show it to be the interest of England to behave considerably toward the greatest customer her trade has had, and the most powerful nation on which she can ever lean in any European distress. In this case, in all that relates to cotton supply, to the failure of one American crop, to future commerce and to the rights of neutrals at sea, it is only necessary to fix the direction in which interest leads in order to make it sure that British principle will follow.—*North American*, 24 Jan.

**Witch Stories.** Collected by E. Lynn Linton. Chapman and Hall.

A STRANGE and melancholy history of human errors and delusions has Mrs. Linton presented to the public. With untiring industry she has ransacked the British Museum for the witch stories of England and Scotland, from the earliest times to the middle of the last century. A truly humiliating monument to human weakness, credulity, and malice has she raised in this painfully interesting compilation. Such a blending of crime and folly as she has recorded would be incredible were it not attested by unimpeachable evidence. The moral should be to teach humility and forbearance, seeing how many noble and virtuous persons have perished under false and absurd accusations, not unfrequently proffered by persons of equal veracity and intelligence. It is to be regretted, however, that Mrs. Linton has occasionally permitted herself to adopt a flippant and quasi-facetious tone, which somewhat mars the grim solemnity of her stories.—*Spectator*.



From Macmillan's Magazine.

## THE YARD-MEASURE EXTENDED TO THE STARS.

BY PROFESSOR KELLAND.

As soon as astronomy had learned to know its position, it began to suspect that this earth, with its sun and moon and planets and comets—the whole solar system—is but a speck in the vast firmament of the heavens. The more men worked and thought the stronger grew the conviction that Sirius, the little twinkling star, must be a sun immensely brighter than our own. For they had tried in vain to find out his distance. In vain! The distance always came out infinite. The measuring line placed in the hand of man shrank into nothingness in respect to the whereabouts of the nearest of those little orbs, and astronomy retired abashed. Do you ask me what is the measuring line which man has in his hand to apply to the stars? I shall tell you that it is no small matter as men count smallness. It is two hundred millions of miles—a line long enough, you would think; yet this line actually shrank into nothingness so absolute that, half a century ago, it seemed as hopeful to mount to the stars as to compass their distance with so puny a line. But the thing has been done at last, and triumphantly done. We know the distance of a few of the nearest stars now pretty accurately, at any rate. And I propose to endeavor to convey an idea of how this knowledge has been attained.

Well, then, to begin at the beginning, the first line to which all others are referred, the primary unit, is the yard-measure, by which ladies' dresses are measured—nothing more nor less. It does not concern us to inquire what that yard-measure is. Suffice it that the legislature provide means to prevent its fluctuation from year to year, or from century to century. Now the yard can readily be multiplied to a considerable extent,—for example into a chain of twenty-two yards,—and with this chain a line of three or four miles can be measured on the earth's surface. The yard is thus expanded into miles. It is no easy matter, certainly, to measure a few miles on the surface of the earth; but it is possible, and has been done. An extension of this process would, of course, measure a very long line; but this is not necessary. Having once got over a

few miles, the yard-measure and the steel-chain and all similar appliances are discarded, and the measured line itself is assumed as a new measuring-rod. True, it cannot be carried about from place to place. Mohammed cannot go to the mountain; so the mountain must be brought to Mohammed. This is done by making direction serve as the evidence of distance. If you measure off on the paper a line a foot long, and take a point somewhere over the centre of it, you will see how the angles of direction from the ends of the line depend on its distance from the line. So, conversely, if a church-steeple, or some other prominent object, be visible from both ends of the line measured on the earth's surface, its distance from either of them can be determined at once by means of angles without approaching the object at all. You see, then, how we can get a good long line of sixty or seventy miles. Now, as the earth is a sphere, or nearly so, if you travel due north a 360th part of the earth's circumference, you will find that the pole star has assumed a position one degree higher in the heavens. Accordingly, if you can measure distances and angles, the determination of the circumference of the earth is reduced to a matter of mere multiplication. The old Indians had got thus far; the old Greeks too. Two hundred and thirty years before the Christian era Eratosthenes, the librarian of the Alexandrian library, observed the meridian height of the sun at Alexandria at the time of the summer solstice, and then set to work to measure the distance up the Nile to Syene, where the granite quarries still show the marks of the chisel that cut out those wonderful obelisks from them. Here he found, or somebody found for him, a telescope ready to his hand—the earliest telescope on record. It was a reflecting telescope, like Herschel's, polished by nature's own machinery. The mirror was the surface of standing water, and the tube was one of those vertical shafts, which, as in Joseph's well, have stood the wear of ages, and are wonderful even in the land of the pyramids and the sphinxes. Far, far down in the bowels of the earth the brighter stars were visible by day. This telescope disclosed the fact that Syene is just under the northern tropic. And so Eratosthenes, like his great benefactor Alexander conquered the world.



He did not weep because there were no more worlds to conquer; for were not the bright orbs, the allies of his first victory, like the Thebans, sure to become an easy prey to his chariot wheels? But the work of Eratosthenes was done, and they gave him as a reward a mountain in the moon, which bears his name.

To be sure, the 250,000 stadia which Eratosthenes estimated as the circumference of the earth, was a rough enough approximation as compared to the precision of modern times. But it was a great work for one man. Since then the nations of Europe have set themselves to the task. One instance deserves mention.

In 1791-'2, the national Convention of France conceived the magnificent idea of establishing a new standard for everything—morals, money, and measure. "Let the heavens," they said, "furnish new units of time, and the earth new units of space. Let the week and the month and the year yield up their ancient prerogatives. Let the former history of the world be forgotten, and let all history date from this time. Let the month be divided into thirty days, and let the Sabbath occur every tenth day. Let the day be divided into ten hours, and let new dials be constructed to show them. Let a girdle be drawn round the earth, which shall connect Paris with the Poles: let this girdle be the standard of measure, and let men be sent out to ascertain its amount." A magnificent order, truly! Yet it does seem easy enough to count by thirties and by tens—to make the months thirty days, and the week ten; but to measure the circumference of the earth, this is a work, a labor! It so happened, however, that the thirty days, and the new sundials, and the unscriptural Sabbaths failed to struggle into existence—a higher power protected France from herself; while the measure of the meridians—a work beset with appalling difficulties—was accomplished; and the *mètre*, the ten-millionth part of the measured quadrant of the earth's circumference, is the national standard throughout France to this day.

Enough. We have measured the earth, but we are a great way from the stars still. Our yard-measure has brought us thousands of miles on our journey; but the stars are millions of millions of miles away, and how are we to get at them? We shall see. Re-

member, then, that, when we had a base-line of a few miles, we could determine the distance of an object seen from either end, by means of angles alone. In the same way, we get at the distance of the sun, or of a planet, by the longer base-line of the earth itself. We get at it roughly, it must be confessed. Copernicus, Tycho, even Kepler himself, had no idea that the sun is so far from us as he really is. Had the sun been fixed immovably in the heavens, it might have been easy, or, at least, it might have been deemed easy, to compare his distance with the size of the earth. But the sun wanders among the stars and rolls round the earth, and thus seems to defy the efforts of the measurer. It was the good fortune of James Gregory to point out a method by which his distance may be determined, spite of his unsteadiness. The orbits of the two planets, Mercury and Venus, lie between the sun and the earth, so that those planets occasionally cross the face of the sun—Mercury frequently, Venus more rarely. It occurred to Gregory that observers at different parts of the earth's surface would witness a transit across different parts of the sun—one seeing it cross the centre, another observing it graze the edge. And, as the time it took in crossing might be readily ascertained in either case, the places at which it crossed would be thereby determined. And thus, knowing the positions of the two places of observation, and the corresponding positions of the projection of the planet on the sun's disk, the determination of the distance of the sun would, by a little help from theory, be reduced to a mere matter of triangles. Perhaps Gregory hardly appreciated the full value of the suggestion he was making. At any rate, nothing followed the publication of his hint for a great number of years. At length, about the beginning of the last century, it assumed in the mind of Halley, the definite and practicable form which renders it now the corner-stone of astronomy. Halley perceived that the planet Venus was greatly to be preferred to Mercury for the determination of the sun's distance from the earth. His lucid statements and earnest exhortations aroused the whole astronomical world, and a transit of Venus was anxiously awaited. Halley himself, indeed, when he directed attention to the importance of the method, had no hope

of living to see it tested. He stood like Moses on the top of Pisgah, and looked on the Promised Land; but to cross the Jordan was not his earthly lot. He had been laid with his fathers many a year before the occurrence of the transit from which he had prepared men to expect so much. At length, in 1761, the looked-for time arrived. Now transits, which are of very rare occurrence, when they do happen, occur in pairs, at an interval of only eight years. Thus, when, after anxious waiting, astronomers beheld the transit of 1761, they knew that in eight years they should witness another. It was probably this circumstance of a second transit to fall back upon that rendered the observations of 1761 so little worth. That date being past, and the occasion lost, the succeeding transit of 1769 was all that the world had to rely on for another century. Had this opportunity been again lost, what a different position would our astronomy and our navigation have been in from that which they now occupy! Happily, all Europe was astrir. Men were sent out north and south, east and west, to make the whole length and breadth of the globe available base-lines. England fitted out an expedition to the South Seas, and placed it under the command of Captain Cook. Who has not read Cook's first voyage? Most of us have devoured it, every part but the account of the observation of the transit, the real object of the expedition. Possibly it would have been otherwise had the astronomer Green returned to tell his own tale. But it was not so to be. His body was consigned to the deep during the homeward voyage. But his observation was made under favorable circumstances, and is invaluable. In this respect Green was happier than some of his fellow-laborers. The Abbé Chappe erected his observatory in California, and died ere his work was well complete. M. Le Gentil had been sent out to Pondicherry to observe the previous transit of 1761; but the winds and the waves detained him on shipboard until after the event had taken place. But Le Gentil was a man of spirit, not easily discouraged. Accordingly, he resolved to lessen the chance of a second disappointment, by remaining at Pondicherry until 1769 for the second transit. But, alas! alas! after eight years of weary waiting, a little cloud effectually hid the phenomenon

from his sight, and Le Gentil had to return to France empty as he left it. Poor Le Gentil! for him there is no cross of honor in life, no national monument at death. He is like the poor subaltern who leads the forlorn hope, and perishes in an unsuccessful attack. Let us drop a tear to his memory and that of Green ere we proclaim that the stronghold has fallen!

The solar system is now measured. The distance of the sun is now ascertained with positive certainty. Seven different base-lines, a host of independent observations, all concur in giving the distance of the sun from the earth—in round numbers—as ninety-five millions of miles. It is a grand era in astronomy. What would Copernicus, what would Tycho have said? They, worthy men, great astronomers as they were, never dreamed that the sun is a tenth part as far away. Even Halley, when he proposed this most successful problem, labored under the delusion that he was some thirty millions of miles nearer the sun than he actually was.

Well, we have extended our yard-measure to a pretty good length now. As the earth goes round the sun every year in an orbit nearly circular, the position we shall occupy six months hence will be just a hundred and ninety millions of miles from where we now are. And we can observe a star from both ends of this line, just as we observed a steeple previously from the two ends of a field. Our measuring tape for the stars is a hundred and ninety millions of miles. Yet, great as this distance is, so inconceivably far away are the stars, that all the refinements of modern science were unable, half a century ago, to deduce anything about them but this negative conclusion—that the nearest of them is at least a hundred thousand times as far from us as spring is from autumn, or summer from winter—a hundred thousand times a hundred and ninety millions of miles; no star nearer than that! You cannot think of such distances as these—the mind is unable to grasp them. Dobrizhoffer, the Jesuit missionary, tells us that the Abipones of Paraguay, among whom he labored, have no better mode of expressing numbers above a score or so, than by taking up a handful of sand or grass and exhibiting it. They had to pass through a deal of schooling to learn to count up to a thousand. The Professor at Angers, wishing to

exhibit to his class the relative magnitudes of the sun and the earth, poured sixteen pecks of wheat on his lecture-table. "This," said he, "represents the sun, and one of the grains represents the earth." If we try a similar method we shall not succeed so well. Let us, however, try. You have some faint idea of three thousand miles, from having painfully measured it on the Atlantic, it may be. The thirtieth of an inch, on the other hand, you can estimate well enough. It is the dot you place over the letter *i*, as you write. Well, suppose this dot to represent the distance between Liverpool and New York; then will the actual distance—three thousand miles—represent the interval nearer than which there is no fixed star. Three thousand miles of dots, when each separate dot stands for three thousand miles! Or you may help your mind, or cheat yourself into the belief that you do so, by some such process as the following. Light travels with such a velocity, that it would fly round the earth, at the equator, eight times in a second. Yet there is no star so near us but that its light occupies more than three years on its journey to the earth. The whole starry firmament, seemingly so bright, may, for aught we know, have been quenched in everlasting darkness three years ago. Were such a catastrophe conceivable, the lamps of heaven would go out, one by one, to mortal eyes, year after year, and century after century, until, some two thousand years hence, the faint light of stars of the sixth and seventh magnitude would alone hold on its journey.

All that was known about the distances of the stars thirty or forty years ago was this negative fact. No star nearer than the parallaxic unit, as it is called, of twenty millions of millions of miles! Whether any were so near, or anything approaching the distance, nobody could say. At length the question of distance was resolved. And here occurs one of those singular duplications—twins in the births of thought—with which the history of science abounds. The first determination of the distance of a star from the earth was worked out simultaneously by two men, under circumstances which precluded the possibility of mutual assistance; and the results were presented to the world within a few days of each other. The memoir of Bessel, which announced a

sensible parallax for 61 *Cygni*, appeared on the 13th of December, 1838. That of Professor Henderson, in which the parallax of a *Centauri* was established, was read to the Astronomical Society on the 6th of January, 1839, and had of course been in the hands of the Society some days previously. There was no desire on the part of either astronomer to contest the claims of the other. Many years subsequently it was my good fortune to unite with Professor Henderson in entertaining his illustrious friend, Bessel; and it was a gratifying sight to witness the warmth of affection with which these two good men welcomed each other as fellow-workers in the same field. They have both gone to their rest—Henderson too early for science; Bessel at an advanced age and full of honors.

The stars which Henderson and Bessel selected were in one respect very unlike. That of Henderson is a bright star in the southern hemisphere; that of Bessel is a faint, inconspicuous star in the northern. But the stars have one thing in common—both have large proper motions. They are not fixed stars, in the strict sense of the word; they move on by a few seconds annually. And this circumstance of a proper motion was an argument in the minds of the astronomers that those stars are in close proximity to our system. This fact, and not their size, was the ground on which they were selected. Professor Henderson commenced his calculations with a different object, and only diverted them into the channel of distance when he ascertained the amount of proper motion which the star has. His observations were not undertaken with a view to this question; they were ordinary meridian observations. And it is not to be wondered at that astronomers were very cautious in admitting results so obtained, when it is considered that observations of this kind are beset with such numerous sources of error, in refraction, aberration, and the like. The method adopted by Bessel, on the other hand, obviates those sources of error. It has some analogy to the method of obtaining the distance of the sun by means of a transit of Venus, inasmuch as the observations are not those of the absolute position of one body, but of the relative positions of two.

The basis on which the operations are

conducted is this: Certain stars are so nearly in the same direction in the heavens as not to be easily separated. Some of these are in reality double—twin stars revolving about each other—at any rate, physically connected. Others have no such connection; and it is argued that, in certain cases, the smaller of the two is likely to be at an enormous distance behind the other. When such is actually the case, there will be a change of the relative positions of the two as viewed from different parts of the earth's orbit, and the amount of that change will depend on the proximity of the nearer star to our system, in precisely the same way as a tree will shift its place more or less rapidly, with respect to a distant hill, as the spectator is carried along in his journey. It is on stars so circumstanced that observations with the view of detecting a parallax were instituted by Bessel. No absolute measures of position of either star are required; simply the relative distances and directions of the one with respect to the other. Thus all sources of error due to refraction, aberration, and many other causes, which equally affect both stars are got rid of.

The conclusion may be stated in a single sentence. The star selected by Henderson is only a little beyond the parallactic unit (twenty millions of millions of miles); that selected by Bessel is about three times as far away. Other stars have been reached, but these two are the nearest known. With a trembling and uncertain hand astronomers have stretched out their line to one or two stars ten times as far away as the farthest of these. But the great host of heaven lie incalculably further back. Shall we ever reach them? Judging from present appearances, we are compelled to answer in the negative. The stars, as we gaze into the sky, seem to defy us. For what do we see there? Close around us we see bright lamps pretty equally distributed over the vault of heaven. They twinkle and dance before us as though conscious of the close proximity of our gaze. But let us look again. Claspings the whole vault of heaven, we see a belt of faint light, some twelve degrees in breadth. This is the milky way, the galactic circle. To the ancients, it was part of the milk which washed the purple stains from the lily; to the moderns, it is the universe itself—the stupendous whole, of which the

brighter stars are but the portions which lie nearest to this little spot of earth. You may understand this if you bear in mind that the spherical appearance of the heavens is a necessary consequence of vast and unknown distance. There is no reality in this appearance. The arrangement of the stars is somewhat like an extended sheet of cardboard, of small thickness. Or, rather, you should imagine a vast plain planted with orange-trees, all loaded with yellow fruit. These oranges in countless myriads are the stars. We are situated near the centre of this grove. Our sun is a small orange; the earth and the planets are tiny buds grouped around it. The neighboring branches are thinly supplied with fruit, and few fruit-stalks bear more than a single orange. But the grove is of boundless extent. Looking on every side, the eye takes in myriads of golden balls, extending away right and left, until individual oranges are no longer distinguishable, except by the glow of light which they send to the eye. This glow is the milky way. Looking upward or downward from the milky way, there is no such profusion of scattering. Much bright fruit does, indeed, cluster on the upper and lower branches; and an unpractised eye is deceived into the belief that the number is infinite. But the eye of an astronomer, armed with proper instruments, finds it far otherwise. He can count the stars; he can gauge the heavens; and the conclusion to which he will arrive is, that the number which the eye takes in diminishes gradually from the galactic circle upward or downward. And this diminution is not only regular, but is very great indeed. From such considerations as these conjecture has ripened into conviction, that the solar system is a part of the milky way; that the scattered bright stars are those parts of the same which lie in our immediate neighborhood; and that the whole group forms a vast extended rolling prairie of stars. The milky way is, therefore, to human apprehension, nothing less than the universe itself. True, there may be other galactic systems, other prairies, other orange groves, as far separated from ours as the prairies of America are from the groves of Europe. Some of the remarkable nebulae seem to hint at the possibility of the thing. On such a subject it is premature to speculate. Now, it is only



those oranges that cluster round us, those which grow on the same branch with our sun, that we have succeeded in stretching out our hand to. What arithmetic shall suffice to count the distance of those which lie on the remoter trees of our grove, the faintest groups of the milky way? What imagination shall wing its flight to those still more shadowy groups which constitute the unresolved nebulae? The yard-measure is too puny; the hand of man is too feeble. An angel's hand must grasp the rod that shall mete out the length and breadth of this golden grove. Man has gone up through the immensity of space and strained his line till it will bear no more. Other generations may mount higher, but only to find the vast circles ever widening beyond. The position which we have reached is a lofty one; but, lofty as it is, future ages shall use it as their point of departure. It is an ennobling thought to console us amidst our many failures. Man rises by the aid of that Divine faculty which pertains to him alone of all

created beings—the faculty of accumulating stores of knowledge, of working in succession, of acting on intelligence transmitted from age to age. The great English philosopher, Bacon, describes man as the “interpreter of nature.” But this is not his highest, not his characteristic designation; for, are not the beasts, are not the birds, are not the very insects interpreters of nature? It is as the interpreter of man, the interpreter of man's records, that man stands distinguished. Herein reason transcends instinct, that its gifts are transmissive and cumulative. Mind does not stand supported by the mind which exists around it, not simply, not mainly. There is a higher and a broader support. The minds of the great of bygone ages live and work in the breasts of their successors. The old Greeks, I suppose knew this, and embodied it in the fable of Athene, the goddess of knowledge, who sprang into existence not as a naked, helpless child, but as a grown-up being, clad in complete armor, from the head of Zeus.

**THE LATE ALLAN MACDONALD.**—A few days since we briefly noticed the death of this worthy and estimable man. General Macdonald was born at White Plains, Westchester County, in 1795, and from a somewhat early age has been before the public in various responsible positions. The first thirty-five years of his life were passed in his native village, where he served for many years as postmaster, and afterwards as sheriff of Westchester County. Subsequently chosen by the old Democratic party as State senator, he formed the intimate acquaintance and won the warm regard of ex-President Van Buren and Governor Marcy. During the administration of the latter he was appointed adjutant-general of the State, and in the Canadian disturbances of that period rendered active and honorable service.

In 1841 he joined his brother, the late Dr. Jas. Macdonald, in the establishment of a private lunatic asylum at Murray Hill, in this city, which in 1845 was removed to Sanford Hall at Flushing. At the death of Dr. Macdonald in 1849, the charge of the institution fell into his hands, and it is in connection with this noble establishment for the treatment of mental diseases that General Macdonald has of late been known and esteemed. Very many of our citizens whose friends have, during these years, received the protecting care of Sanford Hall, will not soon forget his kindly presence, his urbanity, and gentle dignity of manners, or the manly virtues which found a home in his heart and expression in his daily life.

The affairs of Sanford Hall, we are told,

proceed without interruption under the wise administration of the widow of its founder, assisted, as before, by Dr. Ogden as consulting, and Dr. J. W. Barstow as resident, physician, under whose guidance there will be no diminution of its usefulness or impairment of its prosperity.—*N. Y. Evening Post.*

*Words of Comfort for Parents Bereaved of Little Children.* Edited by William Logan, Author of “The Moral Statistics of Glasgow.” London: James Nisbet. 1861.

A COLLECTION of pieces from various sources, in prose and verse, on the death of young children. The poetry comprises the best verses on this subject, from Wordsworth, Milton, Longfellow, Nicoll, D. M. Moir, etc. The prose selections are of a more commonplace character, and are often both morbid and shallow. Yet, on the whole, the book is likely to be of use to the class of Calvinistic believers to whom it is addressed. Holding that salvation is of most difficult attainment, and that all unrepentant sinners shall without doubt perish everlastingly, the writer of these meditations yet strenuously maintains that all who die in infancy, even those of ungodly parentage, are saved and glorified. This is the leading idea of the book, and those Christians to whom such pleadings come as a novelty, will doubtless find in them relief and comfort.—*Spectator.*



From Chambers's Journal.

### A STRANGE WAY TO A LEGACY.

THE year after the general peace was the first of my travels. I was just twenty-two, and thought myself lucky when, early in the summer of 1816, my uncle sent me to be his agent and representative in the house of Skinderkin and Co. The firm were fur-merchants—part Russian, part German, and part English. It was indeed rather a company, and a very composite one. I do not remember half their names. They had partners in all the Baltic, Dutch, and German towns, not to speak of London, where my uncle represented them in King William Street; but the fountain-head of the house was in St. Petersburg, and thither he sent me.

I thought I was going to see the world, and be a great man; indeed, having little acquaintance with the said scene, I entertained secret designs of lording it over the Russian and German clerks, for all the company had their national representatives in the chief house, and I was appointed to the English department. I got a great deal of good advice, and a large supply of congratulations on the position I was to occupy. My maiden aunts counselled me to conduct myself properly; my grandmother recommended me not to grow too proud; and the curate of their church in Hampstead gave me serious admonitions against being perverted to the Greek Church.

I set out with all the weight of my own importance and these sage counsels. I arrived safely, though a voyage to St. Petersburg was no joke in those days, and got regularly located in the house of Skinderkin. It was large enough to satisfy my fondest expectations, and stood close on the Neva, that oldest and outstraggling part of St. Petersburg, said to have been the site of an Ingrian village, the whole of whose inhabitants perished in the adjoining marsh, when the city had to be built at any cost of life or labor, and Peter the Great wielded at once the trowel and the knout for his subjects' encouragement. The nobility had built their palaces there in Peter's time; but partly the moving habits of the Russians, partly the inundations to which it was particularly subject, made them abandon the quarter early in the reign of Catherine II. Merchants and traders of the first class then

took possession; the palaces were turned into stores and warehouses, from which the noble proprietors drew considerable additions to their incomes, in the shape of rent; and in one of the largest and grandest, Skinderkin and Co., had located themselves. In such noble rooms, galleries, and corridors, was business never before done. Such quantities of fur, from Finland, Lapland, Siberia, and Kamtschatka, as came there to be stored, booked, and shipped, I had never dreamed of. Nevertheless, the proverb, that far-off fowls have fair feathers, was strikingly illustrated in the matter of my St. Petersburg appointment. In the first place, the establishment was disciplined after the old Russian fashion, invented in the Tartar times, when every warehouse had to be a fortress, and every merchant a sort of military freemason. We all worked and boarded on the premises, but the work and the boarding were carried on in a dreary penitential style—silent, secret, and systematic—a happy mixture of the house of correction, the monastery, and the barrack. The hours were kept with regulation strictness. The meals were announced by the tolling of a great bell, which might have served for anybody's funeral. Every desk and stool was partitioned off its neighbor; sub and superior sat like so many prisoners in solitary confinement, except that they could partly see, and all watched each other. Then, as to lording it over the Russian and German clerks, not one of them could speak English. I knew nothing of Russian or German—it is not easy lording it without speech—but somehow I discovered that every soul of them cordially despised me, because my uncle was known to have the smallest stake in the firm.

I think that fact was first made plain to me by my senior in the English department; which, let me observe, consisted only of him and myself. He had come from Yorkshire, and his name was Hardstaff—a title which sounded so aristocratic in the ears of the Russians, that they entertained a general respect for him. But had the Fates so willed it, Hardface would have been a more suitable appellation, for I never saw a man who looked as like having been hewn, and not very carefully either, out of a granite rock. He had been forty years in Russia; and although my own stay was not long enough

to prove it by personal experience, I believe there is something in that select climate which Russianizes men of all countries. The process had been effectual on my Yorkshire friend, though nobody could be prouder of his British birth, and more particularly of his native county. Hardstaff was a genuine subject of the Czar, in craft, cunning, and cold readiness for everything that might serve his own interest, no matter whose it injured.

He had sat so long beside the stove, dealt so long with fur-traders, and lived under the discipline of the house, that his manner and, I believe, his mind, had taken the frozen mechanical tone of a Russian official. Natural disposition had probably a good deal to do with it. I never saw the man smile, except at somebody being overreached; and next to the furs, the great business of his life was to take and keep other people down. I will do him the justice to say he was an adept in both departments. His long acquaintance and large experience of the trade made him an authority even with his employers. He had their confidence in other respects to a degree which was generally known, though not made public. In no country are there more unavowed influences at work than in Russia. Hardstaff was not the head of the house; the department in which he overtly acted was the least considerable, but everybody about the premises was aware that his opinion was asked on the most important transactions, that he was note-taker and spy-general for all his superiors; and though the pleasing of him was an impossible aspiration, it was highly imprudent to incur his ill-will.

For myself, I had come to be my uncle's representative, and the old gentleman in King William Street was an acknowledged partner; but Hardstaff was so well established by forty years of sorting furs, writing beside the stove, not to speak of spying and being consulted, he knew so much that I did not, and he was determined never should, and business was so differently conducted in St. Petersburg and London, that I settled into the subordinate position from the first hour of taking my seat at the desk assigned me. It stood at the opposite end of the stove, which, as usual in Russia, occupied nearly half the room, then our counting-house, but looking very much as if it had

once been a lady's dressing-room. There were mirrors, with the richly gilt frames let into the walls, which were magnificently painted; and in one corner there were marks as if a wardrobe had stood there. Of course, my desk was shut in by a rough wooden partition; but it only went half-way to the roof, and by stretching up a little, I could see all that came and went, without, as I thought, being observed. Hardstaff had the same advantage, but he never appeared to make use of it. Hour after hour, I have seen him sitting over his book, registering sables, ermines, and black-fox skins, specimens of which lay on the desk before him, without lifting his eyes or moving a muscle. As for speaking to me, Hardstaff never did such a thing, except when, much against my inclination, I had to ask him some question about the business on hand. Then his answer was given in the shortest possible compass, and the most unintelligible terms he could devise. It was a case of hatred at first sight. Hardstaff did not approve of my coming; he wanted no Englishman there but himself, and I can vouch there was no love lost on my side; but he was not the man to quarrel or to be quarrelled with.

We were seated at our respective desks—I ought to say in our cells—one morning. It was summer-time, being the beginning of July; but summer in St. Petersburg means one long hazy twilight, with the sun seen through it something like our red harvest-moon, higher or lower in the sky according to the hours of the day, with a heavy sultry atmosphere, not unlike what we have in England before a thunder-storm; in short, just the sort of a time in which to get lazy, and do nothing at all. The strange length of day, the dry dreary mode of life, my own strangeness in that foreign land, where I knew neither man nor language, had made me heartily tired of my St. Petersburg appointment, which looked so grand in prospect. I had delivered five letters of introduction at as many houses of my uncle's mercantile acquaintance, was assured of high consideration by every one of them, and never heard another word or sign of their existence. I had walked round the magnificent streets and squares of palaces which distinguish the Russian capital; I had peeped into the dense pine-forests which grow so close upon them; I had looked at the mujecks' huts beside the sluggish Neva, the

great dilapidated warehouses, and the very dirty shipping which high tides brought under their windows. I had gone to the theatre, and paid enormously for a bad seat; I had gone to the coffee-houses, and got disgusted with popular habits. I had a general conviction that everybody was cheating me out of doors, and everybody watching me within, and any apology to get back to King William Street would have been a godsend. In this frame of mind I was sitting, and making believe to write, that dim, sultry day of the northern summer, when one of the opposite mirrors, which happened to stand higher than my barricades, showed me that a woman had actually entered the room.

I would as soon have expected to see a bird of paradise as a female face in that establishment; all our tables were spread, and, I believe, our cuisine and laundry done by men; but there was a woman dressed in what I instinctively knew to be the first fashion out of Paris, not thirty at the outside calculation, with finely moulded features for a Russian, a soft, fair complexion, light-blue eyes, and hair of a golden yellow. She had come in so noiselessly, that I was not aware of her entrance till apprised by the mirror, and, still more astonishing, she was speaking to Hardstaff. Their talk was low and earnest, and I must confess to listening; but they spoke in Russian. However, the eye sometimes does duty for the ear: by its help, and the lowness of the partition, I discovered, to my unqualified amazement, that they were talking of myself. How I learned the fact, it would puzzle me now to tell; I think it was by something in the lady's look. Hardstaff's flinty visage never told tales; but when they had spoken for a few minutes, he raised his voice, and said, in the tone of civil command in which he was pleased to address me: "Mr. Summerville, have the goodness to bring me the invoice of those seal-skins to be sent to our house in London." It was then about furs they had been talking. Did the lady want to buy some of the seal-skins that were packed up and almost ready for shipping to my uncle? No matter; it would give me an opportunity of getting a better sight of her. I had to pass her with the invoice, and that nearer view showed me that not only she was a very pretty woman, but also, that I had seen the same face some days before looking out at a

window of one of the great palaces in the wide and windy square of the Admiralty. The lady looked at me now most graciously, and when I acknowledged her presence with my best bow, said, in very good English, for a foreigner: "I am sorry, sir, to be the cause of giving you so much trouble."

I had not heard my native English for two months, except from the dry, disagreeable Hardstaff, and could have danced for joy on the spot to hear it uttered from those rosy lips; but as it was not desirable to be thought insane, I kept my British composure as well as I could, and stammered out: "No trouble at all."

"You are very good," said the lady. "Might I ask if you have been long in St. Petersburg?"

"Only two months," said I.

"And how do you like it?"

"I have scarcely had time to know."

"Well it is true you English are sensible people, and do not make up your minds in a hurry. I have a great respect for the English"—how well she spoke our language!—"I had a governess of your nation, the best creature in the world. What trouble she took to teach me the little English I know!"

"Her trouble was well bestowed, madame," said I, having by this time got up my courage and manners; "you speak it like a native."

"I did not know that Englishmen could flatter," said the lady, with the sweetest smile; and before I had time to rebut the charge, she added: "But tell me how you like the society here?"

"I have seen very little as yet, madame."

"Ah, perhaps you have no friends or relations in the city?"

"None, madame; I am quite a stranger."

She looked at me so kindly, so sympathizingly, I could have stood there for a fortnight; but Hardstaff handed me back the invoice, saying, with his accustomed frost, "It is all right;" and as I was expected to retire to my desk, I did so with another bow, to which the lady made a polite acknowledgment, talked a few minutes more in Russ with Hardstaff, and went out as noiselessly as she had entered.

From that hour, Hardstaff grew more familiar and communicative with me, as if he had found out that I might be considered somebody. His society was about as pleas-

ant as the fruit of a crab-tree; but I had no choice of company, and wanted to hear what he knew regarding the lady. For once in his life, Hardstaff appeared willing to give the desired information. He told me she was the Countess Rozenki, a widow, rich, childless, and belonging to one of the first families in Esthonia. He further explained her coming to the warehouse, by letting me know that it had been the Rozenki Palace, and that the seal-skins shipped for my uncle had come from an estate most fertile in furs, which the countess owned in the government of Archangel. "It is not exactly her own," said Hardstaff, "but properly belongs to her husband's nephew. She is his guardian, however, and that is nearly as good as ownership in Russia."

Some days after this, on an afternoon when Hardstaff, by a most unusual chance, was not at his desk, I was sitting with the pen in my fingers, and the account-book before me, wondering if she would come again in my time, when there was a slight creak of the door, a light rustle of silk, the prettiest tinkle on the brass rail of the stove, and there stood Madame Rozenki.

"Ah, my English friend," she said, smiling with accustomed sweetness as I presented myself, "how glad I am to see you once again! Shake hands; they always shake hands in your country, don't they? My governess told me so. How I long to visit England!"

It is to be hoped that I shook the small delicate hand, covered with lemon-colored kid, as fashion then required, with becoming grace and ardor. I know that I was intensely charmed. She inquired for Mr. Hardstaff. I told her all I knew about him. She just hinted that her business was not very important or her time pressing. I of course offered her the best seat the place afforded, to await his return, and we got into conversation.

As far as my memory serves me it was regularly opened by her ladyship inquiring once again how I liked the society of St. Petersburg. As we had shaken hands, and she had such a respect for the English, I relieved my mind by telling her the exact truth—that I knew nobody, and nobody knew me; that I had not a soul to speak to but Hardstaff, and was heartily tired and sick of my situation. The lady seemed to enter

into my feelings to a degree which enchanted me, young as I was.

"Far from your relations, and without friends in a strange city," she said, "with no associate but the old man who sits at that desk—it is a hard trial. And you can't return to England without your uncle's permission of course?"

"No," said I; "and he is a man to whom I should not wish to complain of solitude; he would laugh at me for being childish, and bid me mind my business."

"Ah, those money-making old men think of nothing but business," said the countess. "But tell me now, should you like to see society? I mean first-class company—the world of fashion in St. Petersburg."

"Your ladyship, I am not accustomed to fashionable life; I have never been anything but a merchant's clerk."

"Yes; but you have a genteel air, and might be made presentable," she said, surveying me from head to foot with a look of the most candid and kindly patronage; "and as you are so lonely, if you will be a good boy, and come to my house to-morrow evening, you will see a select circle of my best friends. It is only quadrilles, cards, and supper."

Was I dreaming, or did a Russian countess actually invite me out of Skinderkin and Co.'s counting-house to quadrilles, cards, and supper? Then what apparel had I to appear in at the Rozenki Palace? Evening-dress had never been counted among the requisites of my existence, and in the confusion of these thoughts I could only stammer out: "Much obliged to your ladyship, but—"

"You are thinking of your dress, young man," said the countess, laying her small hand lightly on my arm, and looking me archly in the face; "well, don't disturb yourself about that; we can do fairies' work at the Rozenki Palace, and you shall be my Cinderella. Just step round to the tea-shop in the lane behind your warehouse, about seven to-morrow evening; you will find a carriage waiting there; step into it; it will bring you to the palace. The footman will show you a dressing-room, where you will find everything requisite for a gentlemen's toilet; then ring the bell, and the footman will conduct you to my salon."

I do not remember what I said by way of



thanks and acknowledgment for this, it was so unlike anything I had ever met with, so far out of the common course; yet where was the young man in my position who would have refused?

"Oh, never mind," said the countess, cutting me short with another light pat on the arm; "you will be kind to some Russian, perhaps, who may be lonely in England, when you have inherited your uncle's business, and become a great merchant. You won't forget to be at the tea-shop by seven. I can't wait for that old man any longer. Good-by."

She shook hands with me once more, and was going, when a sudden thought seemed to strike her. "My friend, I forgot to ask one thing," she said, turning at the door; "can you speak French?"

"No, madame," said I, blushing to the roots of my hair, as I recollected that that was the language of good society in Russia; but my school-days had been in the time of the long war, when French was neither so common nor so requisite as it has since become to men of business.

"Do you understand it at all?" and her look grew keenly inquiring.

"Not a word, madame."

"That is unfortunate; everybody of fashion speaks French here, and very few understand English; besides, nothing could convince them that you had not been brought up a mere peasant—a boor, you understand, if you could not speak French; but there is one expedient which has just occurred to me; you will pretend to be dumb. I know you are clever enough to act a part; it will be no loss, as you cannot understand what is spoken; but, remember, not a sound before my guests or servants; it might bring us both to be talked of, and I want to let you see society. Good-by."

The door had closed upon her exit before I had well comprehended the curious arrangement, but the more I thought of it, the more clever and advantageous it seemed. The Countess Rozenki had evidently taken an interest in me; was it friendly? was it more than that? A rich and childless widow, young and beautiful, moreover, had taken it into her head to show me good society, and make me presentable. The chance was worth following up, whatever it might lead to. Hard-

staff came in about half an hour after, but of course he heard nothing about it. There was no reason why he should. Seven was our closing hour, then the supper came off; some of the clerks went for walks, or to see their friends; the lazy ones went to bed: some Russians can do a wondrous deal of sleeping.

Having pondered and congratulated myself on the invitation, and given the porter a silver rouble, to take no notice of my movements—a Russian understands such matters without speech—I went forth at seven on the following evening, as if to take my accustomed walk, and in front of the tea-shop there stood a carriage—a very handsome one, but with no crest on its panels, and what I have often remarked in Russia, struck me forcibly on this occasion: though the usual class of customers were coming and going to the shop, though dirty children played about, and lazy men sat smoking at every door, nobody looked curious or surprised to see such an equipage in their quarter. It was strange, too, how quickly the coachman seemed to know his fare; he opened the door the moment I approached; I stepped in, and away we went to the Rozenki Palace.

I knew the city well enough to see that we were not going the direct way, however, and also that we stopped at the back entrance, which was in a narrow, sombre-looking street, with a dead-wall shutting in the grounds of a monastery right opposite. A footman in splendid livery received me, showed me through a passage and up a stair to a dressing-room elegantly furnished, where, according to the countess' promise, I found every requisite for a gentleman's toilet, including a complete suit for evening-dress. The clothes were made more in the Parisian than the London style—so they seemed to me; but who had taken such an exact account of my proportions? they fitted me amazingly, and my whole appearance in the full-length mirror gave me courage for the rest of the trial. Having dressed, I rang the bell as commanded, and, to my astonishment, who should answer it but the countess herself! She wore a magnificent evening-dress, of which, not being skilled in ladies' apparel, I can only say that it was very grand and very low, and that the lady looked to great advantage in consequence. The quantity of jewels flashing from her

snowy neck and arms would have done some ladies good to see; but in she came as friendly and familiar as she had been in the counting-house.

"I just wanted to see how you looked before going down to the company. Ah! very well indeed," she said, turning me round by the arm as if I had been her younger sister, on the point of being brought out. "Didn't I guess your fit, my dear boy? You will make conquests among the girls this evening. But don't forget your part of mute; it is all we can do for the present. Of course, you will learn to speak French in time; I'll give you lessons myself. But now I must go to receive; the footman will conduct you to the salon; do your devoirs as if you had not seen me, and don't forget that you are dumb."

She left me before I could make any reply. In another minute, the footman was at the door. Under his escort, I reached the reception-rooms. What a noble mansion it was! how extensive—how richly decorated—nothing more splendid than that suite of public rooms ever came under my eye. The furniture, mirrors, and pictures were on the most magnificent scale. I don't pretend to be a judge of such matters, but I have seen nothing like it since, and it fairly dazzled me then.

The countess was sitting in the central salon; some of the company had already arrived, others were coming in. I heard the roll of carriages, the hum of voices, the rustle of silks. The novelty of the scene rather confused me, but I was determined to prove that I was clever enough to act my part. There might be a great stake to win or lose that evening; so I walked straight up to Madame Rozenki, made the bow which had been extensively practised for the occasion, saw in an opposite mirror that it was well done, and would have retired to a seat, when, to my utter amazement, she sprang from her velvet sofa, uttered a half-scream of French, threw her arms round my neck, and kissed me on both cheeks. I never was so taken by surprise in all my life, and it is my firm conviction that I must have looked particularly foolish, but there was no time to recover myself; she took me by the arm instantaneously, marched me round the rooms, presented me to everybody, old and young; they all seemed wonderfully glad

to see me, but as every one spoke French, there was no chance of forgetting my part. I bowed and smiled as well as I could; the countess did all the talking, and at last she conducted me back to the salon, and set me down between two very plain and very large young women, with an astonishing amount of feathers and diamonds. They both talked to me with great civility, of course; I did not understand a word, but replied with nods and smiles, which seemed quite satisfactory. People came and came until the rooms were full. I saw officers in Russian uniform, with stars and ribbons on their breasts, and ladies in all sorts of finery, but there was not a pretty woman in the room except Madame Rozenki. She presented me to everybody; they all took as much notice of me as if I had been a foreign prince on my travels.

I did whatever she bade me, which she did, of course, by signs; played cards with three old ladies, danced with two young ones, handed herself to the supper-table, and felt myself in fairy-land: the splendid dresses, the magnificent rooms, the hum of conversation, and the crowd of faces, were all so new, so different from my counting-house life, that the whole seemed like a dazzling dream. At last, the company began to scatter away; the daylight had waned and come again, as it does between eleven and one at that season. The countess whispered to me in a corner that I had better get home; my own clothes were in the dressing-room, and the footman would show me out; that was after a good many ladies and gentlemen had taken an almost affectionate leave of me. I went up accordingly, re-dressed, was shown out at the back gate, found my way to the lane, got in by the broken conservatory, but could not fall asleep till about half an hour before the great bell summoned us all to our places of business. I made up for it by sleeping over the desk that day. Our work was slowly as well as cheerlessly done. If Hardstaff observed anything, he made no remark; if he had, I should not have minded it; my head was full of the Rozenki Palace, the fine company, and the countess. I have said she was a pretty woman; I had no doubt that she was rich, and it was impossible to doubt the interest she had in me. Nothing in the world would have taken me out of St. Petersburg now; I had come to a new

life in the strange northern climate. Madame Rozenki was the first woman I had ever seriously thought of, and how could I help it, under the circumstances?

The very next day, Hardstaff was gone from his desk again. I fancied he had taken to the tea-shop, and thought it beneath him to be known. Gone he was, however, in the afternoon; and with the same creak, rustle, and knock, in came the countess. She made no excuse, did not ask for Hardstaff, but sat down at once, and began talking to me; how I liked her party—what I thought of the ladies—did I know what any of them had said of me, and would I like to come again.

I did my best to answer in a truthful manner, particularly as regarded the ladies, for I saw she had kept a remarkable close watch upon me all the evening. I also took occasion to insinuate my surprise at her own behavior and the general notice taken of me by the company.

"Oh, yes," said she, "I received you as an old friend—that is the best passport to society. They were all friendly, of course. That is our way in Russia: we are quite a warm-hearted people."

They did not look so, but no doubt they were. I would have believed anything that woman said.

She congratulated me on appearing to such advantage; said she should have credit in my bringing out; assured me that the two ladies between whom I sat were her late husband's cousins, and heiresses to great estates in Red Russia; and advised me not to let them or anybody else know I was not dumb till she taught me French. "Then," said she, "the recovery of your speech will be so interesting. But I am forgetting that I want you to write something in my album;" and opening a flat parcel she had brought under her arm, the countess presented me with a beautiful book of the kind with illuminated borders, backs of carved ivory, and all manner of handwritings and languages on its satin-like pages.

"There, you are to write some English poetry—anything you like from Shakspeare or Byron, within that border of forget-me-nots. It will be a specimen of your handwriting and your taste, for me to keep when you have gone back to your own England, and forgotten me."

"I will never forget you, madame," said

I, and might have said more, but she rose with,—

"There is somebody coming—I must go. Bring the book with you to-morrow evening at seven, remember. I won't send the carriage: it might attract attention; the footman will be waiting for you at the back-gate. Good-by, my dear young friend," and the counting-house door again closed between her and me.

With all the care and precision requisite for such a task, I copied a passage from *Romeo and Juliet* into the ivory album. It was intended to indicate my private sentiments. I don't think I was actually in love, but Madame Rozenki, though some years older than myself, was a young, fair, and wealthy widow; and what man at twenty-two would not have fallen into the snare?

I copied the passage, and I went to the party. The footman received me at the back-gate, and showed me to the dressing-room. I got arrayed, rang the bell, was inspected by the countess, in another rich evening dress, was approved of, conducted to the drawing-room, presented to scores of more company, set to dance, play cards, and hand ladies, and allowed to go home in my old clothes, and creep in at the conservatory window as before.

There were, I believe, two or three more invitations by notes brought me by a dirty boy from the tea-shop; but my first evening at the palace serves so completely for all that followed, that I have no additional particulars to record.

An inexperienced person would scarcely believe how rapidly the charms of the scene faded away, or rather became tiresome. The mere sight of grandeur and finery, which seemed so dazzling and fairy-like at first, on the second or third repetition lost its novelty. As I could not understand a word that was said, the real amusement of company was lost to me. Playing the mute's part for so many hours, and going home with nothing but a glare of lights and jewelry in one's eyes, and getting up to business after an hour or two of broken sleep to doze over the desk all day, seemed all cost and no profit. If madame had given me a quiet interview with herself in one of the back-rooms, where one might get up one's courage, and make one's declaration, it would have been something worth losing sleep, bribing porters, and

shirking Hardstaff for ; but the lady called me—her dear young friend, presented me to her company, and gave me hints on deportment. What better signs of a tender interest could any man expect ?

I was weighing the whole subject in my mental balance one day in the counting-house ; I had not missed Hardstaff ; but the creak, the rustle, and the light knock brought me out of my own barricades to see that his desk was vacant, and Madame Rozenki had taken possession of the only chair we kept for strangers.

The usual remarks and inquiries about her last party having passed, she began to compliment me on the elegance of my handwriting as exhibited in her album, a countess-dowager and two heiresses from Moscow had admired it, and I made a bold attempt to direct her attention to the meaning of the passage written, and its suitability to my peculiar case, by saying : “ How do you like the lines I selected ? ”

“ Ah, they are moving,” said the countess, with a very embarrassed look. “ You should not have written them ; I must not hear such things ; you do not know all ; I am an unhappy woman ; ” here she sighed deeply.

“ You unhappy, madame ? ” said I, coming a step or two nearer, for the opportunity was not to be lost.

“ Yes,” said the countess, casting her eyes to the ground ; “ but do not ask me ; I cannot tell you ; yet you are the only person on whom I can depend.” Her eyes were raised now, and looking me keenly in the face : “ Will you do me a service ? ”

“ At the risk of my life, madame,” said I, and the offer was honestly made.

“ Well, I believe you ; but fortunately there is no such risk requisite ; all I want you to do is to make a fair copy of this paper ; ” and she produced from her pocket a pretty large one, neatly folded. “ You see,” she continued, spreading it open before me, “ it is a law-paper, absolutely necessary in a very important suit—one which may result in riches or ruin. I must give it up to the court ; but as it might be lost, or get into my enemy’s hands, an accurate copy would be of the greatest importance to me. Family reasons make it unadvisable to intrust such a paper to any clerk or lawyer, but I can trust you. If you will take the trouble of copying it, word for word, letter for letter,

in your own clear beautiful hand, I will never forget the obligation.”

An instantaneous offer to do that or anything else she wanted, was the only reply I could make.

“ Thank you, thank you,” said the countess, placing the paper in my hand, which, by the by, she pressed. “ You are the only man in the world from whom I could ask such a service, and to your honor and discretion I can trust for keeping the secret. I know it, I know it,” she continued, cutting short my protestations of prudence in all that concerned her. “ When do you think you can get it finished ? ”

“ To-morrow,” said I, glancing hastily over the paper ; it was large, a folio sheet of parchment, and written in the old Slavonic character, which is still employed in Russian law and theology.

“ Well, to-morrow evening bring it to my house ; the footman will admit you at the back-gate, and I will explain everything to you in my own boudoir. Be particular in copying this ; ” and she pointed to some words like a signature at the end of the paper. “ Good-by ; I must go. Come between seven and eight ; ” and the countess was out of the door before she could hear my promise to be punctual.

I copied the paper with great attention to accurate transcription and strict secrecy.

Word for word, letter for letter, as Madame Rozenki directed, I traced out in the privacy of my own room, so as not to be seen by Hardstaff, the curious Slavonic writing, of which I did not understand a syllable.

There was some difficulty in matching the parchment and copying the signature ; it might have been the emperor’s sign-manual, for aught I knew.

The work cost me a sleepless night, but it was finished in good time. No eye could have told the difference between the copy and the original ; nobody had cause to suspect what I was about ; and with the service done, and the great opportunity in the boudoir in prospect, I repaired to the back-gate of the Rozenki Palace between seven and eight.

The same footman admitted me, and with the accustomed look, motionless and stolid ; but instead of leading on to the boudoir, as I expected, he handed me a sealed note,



and stood by in the passage till I read it. That process did not require much time. The billet, which was dated 10 A.M., contained only this:—

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND—Unforeseen circumstances oblige me to set out immediately for Archangel; I must therefore lose the pleasure of receiving you this evening; but we will meet again at my return, when I hope to make more fitting acknowledgments for your friendship. Please to give the papers, both copy and original, to the footman; he has orders how to forward them; and believe me yours, in great haste,

“CATHERINE ROZENKI.”

It was in her own handwriting, and only one course remained for me; I gave the papers to the footman. Having no knowledge of each other's language, no questions could be asked or answered; and I went home, wondering what business could have called her so suddenly to Archangel, when she would return, and what acknowledgments were to be made to me.

These wonders were still fresh in my mind, when, a few days after, the English packet brought me a letter from my uncle, earnestly requesting my immediate return to England. It was so brief, and so hastily written, that I concluded the old man must be very ill, and thinking of his heirs and successors. Hardstaff, to whom I showed the letter, by way of apology for my precipitate departure, was of the same opinion, and thought I should lose no time.

No time was lost; I set out with the English mail packet. It was reckoned a fortnight then from St. Petersburg to London; but I reached King William Street in the forenoon of the tenth day, to find my uncle well and busy in his counting-house.

In answer to my hasty inquiry why he had sent for me, the old man looked mysterious, beckoned me into his private room, and put into my hands a letter from Skinderkin & Co., in which he was informed, in the most business-like manner, that the interests of the firm and my own safety made it advisable that I should leave St. Petersburg immediately, as I had incurred the resentment of a noble Russian family.

The case was now clear to me: the countess had been exiled to Archangel, and I sent home to England, through her high-born relations' dread of a *mésalliance*.

I felt myself the hero of a real romance; but what was to be done? Her address in Archangel was unknown to me; and even if

it had been known, who could say into whose hands my letter might fall. Better to wait, and see what chance time might bring. For the present I parried my uncle's lectures and inquiries by giving him to understand that I could not help the partiality of a rich widow and a countess.

The old man seemed to think it very unaccountable; so did everybody who heard it except my mother, good woman; she calculated on officiating at a wedding-breakfast in the Rozenki Palace.

I became somebody, even in the house-keeper's opinion, but had subsided into my old place in the counting-house, and my seat in the back-parlor, when, with the last packet, which left just before the frost had closed the Baltic, who should arrive but Mr. Hardstaff.

He had resigned his office under Skinderkin & Co., and was on his way to Yorkshire, where he intended to spend the rest of his days in genteel retirement by help of his Russian savings. They had got two Scotchmen in lieu of both him and me; but some affairs which he was commissioned to wind up brought him to King William Street; and I took the only opportunity now in my power to learn something of the countess, by asking him, when we chanced to be left by ourselves, if Madame Rozenki had been calling at the counting-house of late.

“Oh, no,” said he; “she sends her steward now: she wants no more silly young men to do her business.”

“What business do you mean?” said I.

“What you did for her: helping to get her nephew's estate in Archangel. The boy had died while he was yet a minor, in the monastery just behind her palace, where she had placed him to be educated and out of the way. He was dumb, you see, and had been dead for two years, but nobody knew that. She got the rents and furs, and at the last contrived a scheme—I suppose, because you looked a fit subject for it—to pass you off for her dead nephew with her company at the palace, and make you copy out a will leaving the estate to her. I believe the monks and she got up a funeral when you were fairly out of St. Petersburg. Of course, she made Skinderkin & Co. send you.” And the amiable man smiled.

“What did you get for helping in the business?” said I, feeling that every word he spoke was true.

“Fools do the work, and wise folk get the profit,” responded my excellent senior. “But I must tell you she is married to a prince—one of the Romanoff family, they say; and I would advise you to keep well out of Russia: it would never do for people to know the strange way she took to get her legacy.”

From The Examiner, 11 Jan.

#### AMERICA'S ANSWER TO ENGLAND'S DEMAND.

THE affair of the *Trent* has ended as we hoped and expected. In a recent number we remarked that the President having taken care not to commit himself, might give up the prisoners, saying that the concession is made to the principle which the United States has always asserted, that there should not be any seizure of men or merchandise as contraband of war at the arbitrary will and pleasure of any naval officer in command. And this is the turn that has been given to the surrender by Mr. Seward, who says he is defending American principles in admitting the British claims, and quotes the instructions from Mr. Madison, Secretary of State in 1804, to Mr. Monroe, Minister to England.

It would have been better, more creditable to the Federal Government, if it had spontaneously and promptly acted on this view of the case. By waiting for a demand for reparation, it has given its people to suppose that it adopted Captain Wilkes' act and was prepared to justify it, and has thus called forth a vast deal of bluster which cannot now be remembered without humiliation. A prompt and fairer course would have kept the American public right, and spared such an exhibition as that at the Boston dinner, where Judges were not ashamed to applaud Captain Wilkes' outrage, expressly on the score of its lawlessness. It would have been as well, too, to have prevented the hasty, foolish vote of the House of Representatives, and the Navy Secretary's approval of the act now condemned. As it is, the tone of defiance which has been raised so high has had a very ugly and mortifying fall, and the boasters may blame their Government for the reserve which has led them into their egregiously ridiculous exhibitions. To cover their retreat they promise and vow to store up vengeance for the hour of opportunity against England, who has taken advantage of America's difficulties to enforce her arrogant demands. But why arrogant? Our claim to reparation is admitted to be just, and the manner of it, we may be sure, was as courteous as the reason was strong. A promise of lasting hatred for wrongs is not quite Christian, but not without innumerable examples in the long history of human infirmity; but a promise of lasting hatred for a concession of justice is a stupidity of malice thoroughly original.

We have already adverted to the next probable subject of controversy with the American Government, the blockade, the

inefficacy of which is not only proved by the number of vessels which have sailed from and to Southern ports, but confessed by the resort to the detestable expedient of choking up channels, the highways of nations.

The question of the blockade involves the realization of the independence of the South, and much as our commercial interests are concerned, certain we are that our statesmen must approach it with extreme reluctance. It has been the foolish fashion in America to say of certain adverse possibilities, "France will not, England dares not;" but it is well known that France would have raised the blockade some months ago, and that the influence of our Government alone restrained her from a proceeding that would have paralyzed the arms of the North, and assured the independence of the South.

France, at the instance of England, has borne and forborne for a season, but her patience has not motives so strong as ours, and the operations of the stone fleet stimulate her to action in the interests not only of her own suffering commerce, but of civilization. If she should claim our co-operation, she will certainly place us in considerable difficulty, for we cannot but agree with her as to the principle and the facts, that, according to the law of nations, a blockade must be justified by its efficacy, and that the American blockade of a coast of two thousand miles is not efficacious, and cannot be made efficacious, and that its insufficiency must not be eked out by doing the violence to nature of permanently choking up channels and rivers. Still we repeat our hope that England, while she reciprocates the generous good offices of France in the *Trent* affair, will confine herself to moral concurrence, and abstain from co-operation in action, for we could not assist in raising that blockade without touching the pitch of slavery.

From The Spectator, 11 Jan.

THE long-expected answer from America arrived on the 8th instant about eight P.M., and by ten it was known throughout London that Messrs. Mason and Slidell had been restored. Mr. Seward's despatch has been published in New York, and it is known that he affirms the surrender to be in accordance with American principles and an act of simple justice to England. There is also it is said, evidence of a desire to regard the demand as a *concession* on the part of Great Britain, but there is no wish on this side to scrutinize words too closely. The Federal Government has yielded, whatever the motive; and people are too much relieved to do more than remark that an arrest allowed

to be unjust in December must also have been unjust when it occurred, when it was applauded by the House of Representatives, and when it was endorsed by a Secretary whose report was submitted before publication to President Lincoln. The Funds rose at once to 93 3-8, a very high price, and despite the expected wrath of the Western States, it is felt that as America palpably is not seeking war, peace may yet be secured for years. Nations are not vindictive, or Russia and England might still be at war, and the normal position of England and France would be one of active hostility.

We understand that Mr. Seward's despatch, though it disowns and repudiates the course taken by Captain Wilkes, asserts that had the *Trent* been taken into a prize court for adjudication, she would have been liable to condemnation under the law of contraband. This, though quite immaterial to the present issue, is a very grave augury for the future. We believe that no legal ground for such a decision, in the case of an ordinary mail packet, carrying between neutral port and neutral port, could be sustained at all. And we should fear for the permanence of peace should such a case actually arise.

From The Spectator, 11 Jan.

#### THE AMERICAN ANSWER.

THE soft answer that turneth away wrath has seldom been uttered at a more unexpected moment than the present, or by more unaccustomed lips than those of the American Secretary of State; yet never has it been more heartily welcome to the English people. Not because we feared war, though the English people never love it; not even because we dreaded the miseries of a strife which would so nearly approach the type of civil war, though the English shrink from it with hearty horror; not because we were either uneasy or ashamed of our attitude, for never was our conscience clearer as to the actual issue; but because we did foresee with perplexity and humiliation that a struggle with the North, however short, could not but prove in effect a direct guarantee to the South of the temporary stability, at all events, of that great edifice of which they have elected to make slavery the cornerstone. That Canada, the old refuge of the escaped slaves, should have been fighting heartily on the side of the slave-owners who were so recently demanding back their chattels from her; and that England should have thrown her overwhelming power into the same scale of the balance, was an anomaly too distressing to the nation to admit of any heartiness in the cause. Messrs. Mason and Slidell represented a principle which could

not be surrendered, but that these thorough-going advocates of slavery should have represented such a principle was almost as distasteful to us as it was to a Crusader to find his honor pledged to a Saracen, or as it would be to Lord Shaftesbury to find himself committed by the principle of private judgment to espouse the cause of the Jesuits in conjunction with Cardinal Wiseman. It is therefore with genuine popular delight that we find ourselves extricated from this unpleasant dilemma; and Mr. Robson probably never produced so much heartfelt joy by his wittiest song, as when he announced the other day to the audience at the Olympic that this unhappy bone of contention, for which England felt bound to fight, though she had no wish to possess it, was to be resigned without a struggle.

Nor is the public satisfaction diminished, though certainly our perplexity is increased, at the very courteous form in which the answer appears to be couched. When the pause is long, when the expectation is on the stretch, when the tongue which has so long been held still moves, and the lips which have so long "kept silence, even from good words," open at last, one expects to see some symptoms of the slowly kindling fire, some trace of the rising emotion which has been reined in; and when the answer at length comes, as soft, smooth, and unembarrassed as if it were the first spontaneous utterance of undivided and unharassed conviction,—the expression of a mind that has never entertained a doubt, or a scruple, or a shadow of bitterness,—we are naturally as puzzled at the phenomenon as were the companions of the man who was always two hours in arrears with the conversation, and was found travelling painfully with a long-effervesced joke while his companions were pitying the newest tale of sorrow. And the answer is still more surprising to us because the American Government is not usually of this slow, deliberate temper. The conviction so frankly and cordially expressed in December cannot have been essentially different—at least on the merits of the case—in November; and hence we are not unnaturally led to fear that some of the weighty considerations which made the case so clear at the end of the year were exported from this country to Halifax in its last weeks, at even a greater cost of freight and burden to England than those heavy despatches which Mr. Seward received with so much tranquillity "though they weighed one hundred pounds." Of course this aspect of the matter to some extent alters the color of the feelings with which we receive the very friendly and explicit despatch of Mr. Seward. If the justice of the case was so clear, why wait for the formal claim?

There is always an awkwardness in admitting that you have known that you had possession of a friend's property, but were waiting for him to claim it; and the awkwardness is apt to be mutual as soon as the confession is made. No one regards it as exactly a friendly admission, except there be so sentimental a reason for retaining possession that it is in reality a *confessio amantis*; and Slidell and Mason can scarcely be regarded in the light of a stolen keepsake from England. Hence, satisfactory as the general tone of Mr. Seward's despatch undoubtedly is, we can scarcely feel that its history and antecedents are quite so satisfactory. We shall probably continue to feel for a short time a little mutual embarrassment in spite of the reconciliation.

Still we do not believe that the English nation is disposed to criticize the transaction in any ungenerous spirit. It would be a great mistake. We well know that it is a mere fiction to treat the action of the American Government as if it were the action of a single unfettered individual, acting freely according to his own sense of right and honor. In all probability the American Cabinet—never very united—was bitterly divided, and one section of it supported by a very strong public opinion out of doors, probably succeeded in keeping the more rational section at bay until the pressure of the English Government and the despatch of the French Minister came in to the aid of the latter. And even if there were no such division in the Cabinet itself—and that there was such a division the hasty approbation of Captain Wilkes expressed by the Secretary to the Navy seems to make pretty certain—the mere attitude of a large section of the people and of the volunteers of the Potomac, might well have kept a timid Government irresolutely pondering its course; and that all democratic governments are timid in any foreign policy which is not susceptible of a grand coloring to the eye of the mob, the whole experience of history proves. And the same excuse must be admitted in extenuation of Mr. Seward's unfortunate attempt to make it appear that the English Government, in making its present demand, is deliberately abandoning some old claim of belligerent rights. We say this, not as deprecating such a step, if it were really made by our Government. The consequential application of the principles which we accepted by the treaty of Paris would, we believe, oblige us to relinquish many claims that we have long enforced: and the right to search a foreign nation's vessels in time of peace was in fact explicitly abandoned by Lord Malmesbury a year or two ago. But in this particular case it is clear that we are abandon-

ing no principle which has ever been claimed by England. Indeed we have explicitly admitted the right of the *San Jacinto* to board and search the *Trent* for contraband of war, and to refer the case to the proper prize court in case anything or person believed to be contraband, or quasi-contraband, had been discovered there. We have, therefore in this instance, in no way surrendered a single English position on the subject of the right of search, and the attempt to make it appear that the American Government has gained any concession by our attitude is simply a show of logical cover to Mr. Seward's retreat. But again we say, looking to the state of opinion expressed by Mr. Hale, of New Hampshire, in the Senate, and by many of the Northern States, with regard to the disgrace to America involved in a surrender of the prisoners, this is not a device which we ought to care to resent. It is not a very manly course: but for "such creatures as we are, in such a world as the present,"—especially if the creatures be Americans and the locality Washington,—it cannot be pronounced a very guilty one.

One word as to the future attitude of England. We shall not, we trust, be in any danger of the grave mistake of so far identifying Messrs. Slidell and Mason with the cause of which they have been for a moment the accidental representatives—or misrepresentatives—as to receive them on their arrival in England with any marks of congratulation. We have paid dearly for them without feeling any sympathy with them, simply because they were covered by the national flag. Let us not falsify our true position by transferring to the men the feelings which were excited by the refuge they had sought. Let us show the North that the commissioners were really as insignificant to their cause as we have always maintained; that they have not the power to modify in any degree the feeling or the principles of England; that they were only dangerous to the North while they were under the lock and key of the Washington administration; that they were thrown away upon ungrateful England, and might have served the South better by fighting as privates on the Potomac than by disseminating their sentiments here. Now that we have redeemed the stolen property, not because it was valuable, but because it was stolen, let us show them what we think of its real worthlessness. We trust that a more cordial feeling on both sides will be the result of this temporary storm.

From The Economist, 11 Jan.

At last we are relieved from the uncertainty which, for the last few weeks, has



been hanging over us. The American Government has decided—not very logically perhaps, but very wisely—to release on our demand the commissioners whom it had previously detained and imprisoned. So far as the gentlemen themselves are concerned, this is a very tardy and unsatisfactory reparation. They will justly ask: “Why we were ever incarcerated, if we are now released? Both cannot be right. Either you had a right to capture and detain us, or you had not: if you had, you are wrong in releasing us; if not, as you now say, you were acting tyrannically and illegally in detaining us.” But we are not concerned so much with the Confederate commissioners as with ourselves. We have obtained all which we did ask, all which we could ask, and more than we could venture with any certainty to expect. We requested the release of the commissioners, and they are released. If there were any previous facts which excited our just resentment, or which awakened our solicitude, now those facts should be forgotten. An old proverb tells us not to scrutinize gifts too closely, and under the circumstances we will consider the act of Mr. Lincoln a free gift.

The moral of all this is very plain and simple. In all future dealings with the American Government, we must ask for what we want, courteously but peremptorily. The evident fact remains. Until they received Lord Russell's letter, they showed no intention of releasing—beyond all question did not intend to release—the commissioners. After they received that letter, the commissioners were at once released. The effect of the Palmerstonian policy is evident, for we have experience of it; that of a refining, hesitating Aberdeensite policy must be conjectured, but it would probably have failed in the principal result. An aged statesman will seldom be able at the extremity of life to confer so signal and so characteristic a benefit on his country.

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From The Press, 11 Jan.

WE are thankful that our hopes of peace have been realized, and that we can look forward to a year undisturbed by war. The darkest hour is immediately before the dawn; and certainly, hope had all but died away in this country when the *Europa* brought the tidings that no answer had been given by the Cabinet of Washington. Silence seemed refusal. It appeared as if the Cabinet of Washington had made up its mind for war, and delayed its answer in order that it might employ the days of grace

accorded to it in forwarding instructions to its officers in all parts to be ready to commence hostilities on a certain day. Not unnaturally, therefore, the ministerial journals on Wednesday resumed their bellicose tone; and almost every one, abandoning his hopes, was resigning himself to the ungrateful prospect of war, when in the afternoon the telegraph surprised us with the intelligence that all we asked was to be given. The commissioners and their secretaries were to be handed over to Lord Lyons when and where he pleased: another but less authentic paragraph stating that they had already been given up. The question was at an end, and, with a sudden rebound, people already begin to neglect the subject in the happier pursuits of reviving commercial enterprise.

But why the Cabinet of Washington should have acted as it did is surprising. At the last hour it has conceded all that we asked. At first it was expected that the note which accompanied the concession of our demands would be saucy and taunting, as American State-papers often are. But this seems not to be the case. The note, so far as the published summary goes, is unexceptionable. It neither cavils nor taunts; it frankly concedes the point at issue. How happens it then that the Cabinet of Washington have been so superfluously tardy in acknowledging our claims? Before ever Earl Russell's despatch reached America, Mr. Seward had written to Mr. Adams to say that the seizure of the commissioners was unauthorized by the Federal Government; and in his final reply to Lord Lyons he acknowledges that England is wholly in the right. Then why not release the prisoners at once? Any European Government would have done so. The commissioners might have been at Liverpool before Earl Russell's despatch had reached New York. It is only echoing the universal remark to say, that by acting otherwise the Cabinet of Washington missed a great opportunity. They might have given an example of dignity, and of deference to justice, which would have obliterated the remembrance of their past failings in these respects; whereas, by refusing to acknowledge the justice of our claims to the last moment, they lay their conduct open to the very worst interpretation.

The tone of Mr. Seward's note appears to be satisfactory—its substance unquestionably is so: why, then, impute an opposite spirit to the previous conduct of the Cabinet from which it proceeds?

In our desire to do justice to the Federal Government we have left ourselves little space to speak of matters hardly less im-

portant. War is averted, and we are thankful; but unhappily the one side of the picture is almost as ugly as the other. Peace means a continuance and aggravation of the dreadful war between North and South. It means a thousand miseries to the American States themselves: it means continued hardship and distress among millions of our own people. Peace means No Cotton—no work for our thousand mills—no wages for our manufacturing classes—immense losses to our capitalists—special burdens on the State. We do not rejoice in a pacific settlement of this question upon selfish grounds of material interest. Nearly all that we would have spent on the war will, we fear, be swallowed up by the consequences of peace. It is computed that the supply of cotton on hand or expected will hardly suffice to keep our mills going for six months if working only four days in the week; so that, even working short time, unless some unforeseen event occur, by the end of June every bale will be exhausted. In such a case the calamity will far exceed the remedy of private benevolence. The Government must interpose on behalf of our manufacturing population, as it did in the case of the Irish famine. Directly or indirectly, therefore,—by public grants or private losses,—we are likely to suffer almost as much from the consequences of peace as by the costs of war. Still, we rejoice that peace has been maintained. Although ready to accept war if reparation for the outrage on our flag were withheld, we have not concealed the regret with which we looked forward to the possibility of such an issue. And now that peace is assured, we are thankful. It is but the lesser of two great evils, but we cannot hesitate for a moment in our preference.

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#### PACIFIC MACARONICS.

SEWARD, qui est Rerum cantor  
Publicarum, atque Lincoln,  
Vir excelsior, mitigantur—  
A delightful thing to think on.

Blatit Plebs Americana,  
Quite impossible to bridle.  
Nilil refert: navis cana  
Brings back Mason atque Slidell.

Scribit nunc amœne Russell;  
Lætus lapis \* claudat fiscum:  
Nunc finitur omnis bustle.  
Slidell—Mason—pax vobiscum!  
—Press.

\* The scholiast suggests Gladstone.

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From The Saturday Review, 11 Jan.

Now that the risk of war has passed away, it is allowable to reflect on the greatness of the evil which has been averted. An enormous preponderance of force would probably have secured the English arms from disaster, but it might have been found difficult to conquer an honorable peace. The Americans would have been well aware that, in a war for the vindication of the national honor, there would be no attempt at territorial aggrandizement, and that a generous enemy would not even desire permanently to destroy the prosperity of the Republic. The Atlantic ports would have been blockaded, the independence of the South would have been at once established, but, unless Canada had been seriously threatened, the Maine frontier itself would probably have escaped rectification. Enormous expense would have been ungrudgingly incurred without a wish for profit or a hope of what is called glory. The chief reason for the repugnance to the war was founded on the distracted and helpless condition of the former Union. Northern journalists and stump orators have uttered frantic protests against the cowardice of England in attacking or menacing during its utmost need the power which had so often, in the days of its prosperity, enjoyed impunity for insult and encroachment. Policemen are familiar with the logic of many an angry vixen who defies her husband to return an unprovoked blow on pain of being denounced as a coward. The appeal, however inequitable, is allowed to have a certain force, for it is unsatisfactory, even when it is unavoidable, to take advantage of the weak.

The war which we have happily escaped would have been undertaken under an overwhelming sense of duty, with a reasonable prospect of uninterrupted success; but every blow inflicted on the enemy would have been attended with regret, especially as it would have increased and perpetuated the resentment of the baffled aggressor.

Mr. Seward's despatch will not be received in an unfriendly spirit. Its voluminous apologies for doing right are addressed, not to his nominal correspondent, but to an angry population, and, perhaps, to an imperfectly educated superior. The Secretary of State, himself an eminent lawyer, may probably have understood from the first the utter futility of the arguments of such jurists as Mr. Everett, Mr. Sumner, and Captain Wilkes. Mr. Cushing, formerly a professed enemy of England, publicly repudiated all excuses for the seizure except the defence which was founded on a misinterpretation of Lord Stowell's reference to the rights and liabilities of ambassadors. Under the pres-

sure of official responsibility, Mr. Seward may have examined the question more thoroughly, and Europeans might suppose that he would have served his country better by acting on the conviction which he now avows before he could be supposed to yield to coercion. Yet there may have been sufficient reasons for the delay, and England at least has no right to complain of the policy which exhibited to the world her own resolution and her great resources, while it involved Federal politicians in every possible inconsistency and absurdity.

Most of what can be said in favor of the Americans dates from a late period in the history of the transaction. When he had quite made up his mind that the thing must be done, Mr. Seward had the sense to do it in a straightforward and courteous way. He acknowledged that we were quite right in our claim, and that we were fully entitled to ask for the commissioners if we pleased. He does not appear to have tried to shelter himself behind screens of diplomacy that he knew would be torn away immediately. He also, at an earlier date, wrote a conciliatory note to the English Government, stating that Captain Wilkes had acted without authority, and that all questions to which the affair might give rise would be discussed in an amicable way. But this is all. He acted tolerably well when he did act, but he did not act when he ought to have acted. If the American Government knew perfectly well, as it now professes to have done, that Captain Wilkes plainly violated the doctrines of international law laid down in America, it ought long ago to have placed the prisoners under the protection of that flag from the shelter of which they had been wrongly taken. The reception of the Report of the Secretary of the Navy was also a very grave dereliction from high and statesman-like principle. It has been said that the reception of these reports means nothing, and that the President is not bound by it. At any rate, this is not the view of the President himself. He cut out a passage from the Report of a Secretary which he feared would commit him on the dangerous ground of abolition, and yet he was not afraid of being committed by a view of international law which his Cabinet apprehended would give great offence to England, and thought wholly untenable. Evidently the position of the American Government was this: The President and his chief supporters were prepared to yield if England was firm; but they thought that England might possibly not be firm; and that, meanwhile, they might just as well take the popular side and detain the prisoners. In the long run they have done justice, and have done it frankly and

courteously; but they were quite prepared to shirk doing justice if possible. Their conduct is at once better and worse than was expected. They have, in the last resort, acted on their own judgment without reference to the mob, and they have been above the petty insolence of abusing and annoying those to whom they have had to yield; but they made no attempt whatever to guide or instruct their countrymen, or to uphold their own views of law, or to do justice so long as a hope remained that England might be inclined to take the affront quietly.

It is impossible to estimate fairly the manner in which the American people have behaved in the matter, for, besides the newspapers, we have very scanty materials for forming an opinion; and the Americans are as angry if their newspapers are considered to represent the country, as English physicians would be if their scientific attainments were measured by the puffs of quack medicines that are showered as handbills into cab windows. It deserves, however, to be noticed, that the mass of American newspaper readers seem to have sincerely believed that Captain Wilkes was right in law. Every one told them that this was the case.

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From The London Review, 11 Jan.

It was with unwillingness that the country resolved to go to war rather than tolerate an outrage on its flag, and it is, therefore, with gratification that we learn there is no longer a probability of our being required to draw the sword. The Northern States, may, however, feel sure that we shall not forget the insult offered us, and the thousand interruptions to our commerce that have been caused by subsequent events. We have no desire to perpetuate our injuries, but it cannot be forgotten that through a wanton act of aggression the shadow of war clouded our prospects for several weeks, checking almost every department of trade, and compelling the Government to incur heavy extraordinary expenditure at a time when it was carefully pursuing a policy of retrenchment. The evil has not, it is true, been an entirely unmixed one. It has brought out our friends, and with France especially we shall be for the future on terms of much greater cordiality than in the past. The emperor gave us conclusive proof of the friendly feeling he entertains towards us, and it is not too much to anticipate that the war panics which have been so frequent of late years will not recur again for a considerable time. Austria and Prussia also ranked themselves with firmness on our side, and unquestionably the remonstrances of these powers have saved the

Americans from disasters immeasurably greater than any of which their history bears record. A war would have been costly to us—to them it would have been almost ruinous.

To us it is a matter of the very smallest consequence what are the opinions of the press or the mob. It is far more important to know that the American Government has not thought it worth while to make use of any offensive expressions towards us in its diplomatic notes, but that the justice of our claim for reparation was acknowledged in franker terms than might have been looked for from Mr. Seward. The despatch of our Government was distinguished by great moderation and calmness, and never was ultimatum tendered in a more conciliatory form. Earl Russell's despatch does honor to the Government and to the country—it fully met the exigencies of the case; it was firm and yet friendly in tone; and it happily assumed that the act of Captain Wilkes was performed without instructions from the

Government. Mr. Seward could not but admit that in "arguing on the British side of the case" he defended American principles as they have been over and over again asserted. We receive this admission with pleasure, while we regret that it was not sooner made, and that no rebuke was administered to Captain Wilkes. Had President Lincoln caused an intimation to be made to the commander of the *San Jacinto* of his disapproval of the act of seizure, there would have been little humiliation in delivering up the commissioners; but as reparation was delayed until the English fleet hovered near the Northern ports, and until the leading powers in Europe had added remonstrances to our ultimatum, we cannot ascribe to the Cabinet any willingness to do justice, or give them credit for any sincerity in their avowed convictions, but rather believe that they would have retained Messrs. Slidell and Mason if there had been no fear of our armaments, and no visions of their own ruined commerce and bankrupt finances, before their eyes.

MR. MARK LEMON has begun a course of very entertaining, and, in their motley way, instructive, lectures on Old London. The life of a great capital is full of miscellaneous oddities, and its eras are marked by grand *spectacles*. It would appear from Mr. Lemon's lecture, that while the miscellany of London life is now more complex than ever, the *spectacles* of the nineteenth century, whether intentional or accidental—the pageants or the conflagrations—are not nearly so grand as those of the reigns of the Plantagenets. Royal processions with nymphs standing in Cheapside distributing silver cups of wine to the king and retinue—processions of the mob helping themselves without the aid of nymphs, to silver and wine also—Aldermen with garlands wreathed round their "honorable brows"—May-day peasants hastening to the Maypole—the Evening Watch that paraded London streets one night only in the year—and many other picturesque or stately trains, wind, in quaint or grand costume, through the scenery of Mr. Lemon's lecture. And the admirable paintings with which he illustrates his stories, gratify the love of *spectacle* still lingering in modern Londoners.—*Spectator*, 11 Jan.

COMPOSERS are often charged with plagiarism of certain passages of melody. But all such passages or phrases of expression as they may be, or are called, have, from time immemorial, been familiar to the ear, and enjoyed by feeling, and have come down to us without known authorship or date. On this subject, then, of the individual form or phrase, there can be no more originality than there can be on that of the syllables of speech, which, in all their permutations, have, throughout time, and among nations, already been made. The mass of composers—like the mass of writers, with their commonplaces of thought and language—again and again borrow and repeat the commonplace phrases of melody, while a few, like Bacon and Shakspeare, or Haydn and Mozart, choicely select and combine those original thoughts, in one case, and expressive vocal notes in the other, which in their exalted association with nature and truth, are so far above being vulgarized by general imitation, as to be new, and to please forever.—*James Rush, M.D., on the Voice.*



The following article is copied by permission from *Harper's Magazine* for February. It is written by BENSON J. LOSSING, the Artist-Author of the "*Field Book of the Revolution*." Mr. Lossing is the most careful and accurate writer of American History. His "*Field Book*" has become a classic. He has, as we know, ready for issue a "*History of the War of 1812*" uniform in appearance and design with the "*Field Book*."

We are glad to hear from Messrs. Harper that this on the Whiskey Insurrection will be followed by a series of curious historical parallels, showing that every feature of our present rebellion is a reproduction on a larger scale of incidents in our early history. The second will appear in the March number of *Harper's Magazine*.

From Harper's Magazine.

#### THE WHISKEY INSURRECTION.

In the fertile region of the Monongahela River, in Western Pennsylvania, lived a hardy race of pioneers when the Old War for Independence began. They were mostly descended from the people of North Britain and Ireland, and had built their log-cabins there soon after the close of the French and Indian war, in 1763. They were courageous, industrious, self-sacrificing, and religious. Habit and necessity made them frugal; isolation made them clannish. They were chiefly of the strictest sect of Seceders, and were usually conscientious "doers of the word." Their wealth lay in the virgin soil and dark forests, and was brought out with brawny arms guided by intelligent wills and practical judgment. Their wants were few, and their resources less, for many years, while changing the wilderness into a garden. Until the era of the National Constitution no house for public worship was erected in all that region. In winter as well as in summer their religious meetings were held in the open air. It was common for families to ride ten, fifteen, and even twenty miles each Sabbath to hear the Gospel preached. The young people frequently walked, carrying their shoes and stockings, if they had any, in their hands, that they might last a long time. A grove was the usual temple for worship. Rude logs composed the pulpit and the audience seats; and the human voice, uttering hymns from memory, was the only organ that filled the woods with the sounds of sacred music.

These settlers were isolated and self-dependent. For a long time sheep were scarce, and wool was a great luxury. Deer-skin was a substitute for cloth for men and

boys; and sometimes women and girls were compelled to resort to it. The women manufactured all the linen and woollen fabrics for their families. Over-coats were almost unknown for a long time; and blankets and coverlets were taken from the beds in the daytime and used as substitutes during the severities of the long winters. So great was the destitution of clothing at one time that, when the first court was held at Catfish—now the beautiful town of Washington, in Washington County—one of the most prominent citizens, whose attendance as a magistrate was required, was compelled to borrow the leather breeches of an equally respectable neighbor who had been summoned to act as grand-juror. The lender, having no change, was compelled to stay at home.

For some time they had no stores of any kind. They had no iron-works for the manufacture of implements, no salt, and very little money with which to purchase the necessaries of life. For several years, before they had time to raise cattle and grain, peltry and furs were their chief resources. There was a hunter or trapper in every family; and in the autumn, when the farm labor was ended, the winnings of the gun and gin were carried over the mountains upon horses or mules, furnished with pack-saddles, a bag of food, a bell, and a pair of green-withe hobbles. They went in little caravans to Philadelphia and Baltimore. At night the horses were hobbled and turned out to feed, the bells being a guide to their presence in the morning. The peltries and furs were bartered for salt, iron, and other necessities; and with these the animals were again laden, and their heads turned toward the mountains and the settlements beyond.

Rye became the principal cereal crop of the pioneers when their land was cleared. It furnished them with wholesome food and an article for barter. But it was bulky and cheap, and therefore not convenient or profitable for the uses of foreign commerce. A horse could carry only four bushels over the mountains. There was but a small demand for the grain at home or abroad. What must be done with the surplus? Only one way for a profitable disposition of it seemed feasible. A horse could carry twenty-four bushels of rye when converted into whiskey, and why should not this metamorphosis

of Ceres into Bacchus be employed for the benefit of commerce? Neither conscience nor the Church nor the State interposed objections. Tradition urged it. They were descended from a whiskey-making, whiskey-loving people. The use of whiskey was not discountenanced by society. Temperance lecturers were not dreamed of; and the Pennsylvania excise law, enacted in 1756, was inoperative beyond the mountains, where distilleries had been early erected for the comfort of the settlers. Whiskey was there as free as air; and as early as the close of the Revolution many a horse was seen making his weary way over the Alleghanies with twenty-four bushels of rye on his back in the shape of "old Monongahela." Whiskey became the most important item of remittance to Philadelphia and Baltimore to pay for salt, sugar, and iron consumed by the dwellers beyond the mountains.

Having come from a country where the most detestable of all public functionaries was the exciseman, it may readily be imagined with what feelings the people of the Monongahela region received the intelligence of an excise law passed by the first Congress, early in 1791, which imposed a tax of from ten to twenty-five cents a gallon upon all domestic spirits distilled from grain. It was a part of the revenue scheme proposed by the eminent Alexander Hamilton, the first National Secretary of the Treasury, for the restoration of the public credit by making provision for the payment of the public debt.

It will be remembered by the intelligent reader that soon after the promulgation of Hamilton's financial scheme, at the beginning of 1790, a party opposed to the policy of the administration of Washington, as developed in that scheme, arose, at the head of which, when it took definite shape, Thomas Jefferson, the Secretary of State, appeared. The party called itself sometimes Republican and sometimes Democratic. It grew rapidly in numbers and strength. It was thoroughly imbued with the segregating principles of French Democracy, as developed by the bloody revolution then in progress in France; and it hailed with delight the landing on our shores of "Citizen Genet," who came as the ambassador of the "French Republic," and a Democratic propagandist. While Genet and his mission were lauded, and his efforts to entangle the United States in the kin-

dling European war, as an ally of France, were warmly seconded, President Washington's proclamation of neutrality was assailed by the most violent denunciations. To further the designs of Genet and embarrass the financial and foreign policy of the administration, "Democratic Societies," so called, in imitation of the French Jacobin clubs, were formed. They were secret in their membership, organization, and operations. Their relation to the subject of this paper was immediate.

The tax on domestic distilled spirits led the hated exciseman to the doors of the whiskey-makers in Western Pennsylvania, as well as in other parts of the Union. The appearance of that functionary excited disgust and alarm, and engendered disloyalty. Ambitious politicians took advantage of the popular discontent to promote their own special interests. Among these the names of Bradford, Brackenridge, Marshall, Findley, Smilie, and Gallatin appear the most conspicuous. Bradford was a bold, bad man from Maryland, an early and wealthy settler, who built the first shingled house in Washington County. He was then the prosecuting officer for that district. He had already made strong efforts to divide the State and form a new commonwealth composed of the counties west of the mountains. Brackenridge was a Scotchman. He was a lawyer at Pittsburg, and then Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Marshall was a wealthy settler from the North of Ireland, and then held the office of Registrar of the District. Findley was a member of Congress, wary and influential; and with Smilie, a brother Scotchman, was the most efficient instrument in exciting a rebellious feeling among the people. All of these politicians labored faithfully to destroy regard for the new Government of the United States in the hearts and minds of the inhabitants west of the Alleghanies. Then, as in our day, the most active practical enemies of the National Government were those who had been honored with the public confidence and fed by the public bounty.

Gallatin was from Switzerland, and had been in the country only eleven years. He was young and enthusiastic. He was a large and influential landholder on the Monongahela. Afterward, as a useful and patriotic citizen, he held many offices of great trust

under the Government whose laws he was then in his blindness led to oppose. These leaders were all of the Democratic school according to the French model, and, with their active associates, were denominated by George Clymer as either "sordid shopkeepers, crafty lawyers, or candidates for office; and not inclined to make personal sacrifices to truth and honor." Associated with them was Herman Husbards, a very old man, who had distinguished himself in insurrectionary but patriotic movements in Western North Carolina more than twenty years before.

These men played the demagogue effectually, and used the odious excise law adroitly as an instrument for wielding the popular will in favor of their political interests; the most of them, doubtless, never dreaming that their course would lead to an open armed rebellion against the laws of the land. Secretly and openly they condemned the excise law, and encouraged the people to regard as enemies the appointed collectors. At their instance a public meeting was held near the close of July, 1791, at Red Stone Old Fort (now Brownsville), when arrangements were made for committees to assemble at the respective courthouses of Alleghany, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.

One of these committees, at the county seat of Washington, passed very intemperate resolutions on the 23d of August, which were published in a Pittsburg paper, and greatly inflamed the public mind. It was resolved that any person who had accepted or might accept an office under Congress, in order to carry out the excise law, should be considered inimical to the interests of the country; and the citizens were recommended to treat such men with contempt, and to refuse all intercourse with them. Soon afterward a collector of the revenue in Alleghany County was waylaid by a party of disguised men, who cut off his hair, tarred and feathered him, took his horse from him, and compelled him to walk a long distance. A sort of reign of terror ensued. \*Processes issued from the court for the arrest of the perpetrators of the outrage could not be served, for the marshal was threatened with similar treatment at the hands of the people. In fact, a messenger sent with the processes to a deputy-marshal was whipped, tarred and feathered, deprived of his horse blindfolded

and tied, and left in the woods where he was discovered by a friendly eye some hours afterward.

The President was perplexed by these lawless proceedings. He had no precedent to guide him. He knew that the excise law was everywhere unpopular, and he feared that similar open opposition might show itself in other parts of the country. Besides this, Congress had not then provided the means by which the Executive could interpose the strong arm of military power to aid the Judiciary in the enforcement of the laws. \* He also felt it desirable, in a Government like ours, to refrain from the use of coercive measures as long as possible, and he forbore to act. Congress, in May following, greatly modified the excise law by a new enactment, and it was hoped that further difficulties would be avoided.

These expectations were not realized. It suited the purposes of the Democratic leaders to keep up the excitement, and measures were adopted for intimidating the well-disposed citizens who desired to comply with the law as modified. The newspaper at Pittsburg was compelled to publish whatever the demagogues chose to print. A convention, held at that place on the 21st of August, 1792, of which Albert Gallatin was Secretary, adopted a series of resolutions, denouncing the excise law as "unjust, dangerous to liberty, oppressive to the poor, and particularly oppressive to the Western country, where grain could only be disposed of by distilling it." It was resolved to treat all excise-officers with contempt, to withdraw from them every comfort and assistance, and to persist in "legal" opposition to the law. A Committee of Correspondence was appointed, the people at large were called upon to co-operate, and rebellion was fairly organized. Washington issued a proclamation a few weeks afterward, exhorting all persons to desist from "unlawful combinations," and directed Randolph, the Attorney-General of the United States, to prosecute the chief actors in the Pittsburg Convention. George Clymer, the Superintendent of the Revenue, was sent into the disaffected counties to obtain testimony; but the Attorney-

\* A bill to provide for calling forth militia "to execute the laws of the United States, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions," was passed by Congress in April, 1792, and was approved by the President on the 2nd of May.

General, who secretly favored the insurgents because their leaders were his political friends, could find no law to justify proceedings against the offenders, and the matter was abandoned.

During the year 1793, and until the summer and autumn of 1794, the people of Western Pennsylvania continued to defy the excise law, to grow bolder in their opposition, and to insult and maltreat those whom the Government appointed to execute it. Distillers who complied with the law were injured in person and property; and armed men patrolled the country, spreading terror and alarm in all directions among loyal citizens. Tar and feathers and the torch were freely used, and the violence employed was in a manner personified, and called *Tom the Tinker*. A loyal distiller was attacked and his apparatus was cut in pieces. The perpetrators ironically called their performance "mending the still." The menders, of course, must be *tinkers*, and the title, on the suggestion of a ruffian named Holcroft, collectively became *Tom the Tinker*. Advertisements were put upon trees and other conspicuous places, with the signature of *Tom the Tinker*; and letters bearing that signature, menacing certain persons, were sent to the *Pittsburg Gazette*, and published, because the editor dared not withhold his assent. Women and children in loyal families turned pale at the name of *Tom the Tinker*. He was the Robespierre of the Monongahela district.

One of the most influential and respected of the loyal men of Western Pennsylvania was John Neville, a soldier and patriot of the Revolution. He was a man of wealth; his son had married a daughter of General Morgan, the hero of the Cowpens, and his social position was equal to any in the country. He was a native of Virginia, a friend and personal acquaintance of Washington, and had been a member of the Provincial Convention of his native State and of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. This excellent citizen was appointed Inspector for his district, under the provisions of the odious excise law, and it was believed that he would command universal respect. Not so. The spirit of Anarchy was abroad, and its baleful influence was felt in every household. Neville's beautiful mansion, upon a slope of Bower Hill,—seen by the

traveller upon the turnpike-road from Pittsburgh to Washington, about eight miles from the former city, when looking over a fertile bottom from the mansion of the Woodville estate,—was attacked on the 16th of July, 1794, by a hundred armed men. Neville and his family made such resistance that the assailants retired; but on the following morning, reinforced to the number of five hundred, and led by John Holcroft, who called himself *Tom the Tinker*, they renewed the assault. Some soldiers from Fort Fayette, under Major Kirkpatrick, were in the house. Neville, who knew his life to be in peril, escaped. The soldiers made a brief but fruitless resistance, killing a leader of the assailants and wounding others. The family, under the protection of a white flag, were removed, and the mansion and all the out-buildings were laid in ashes. The marshal of the district and the younger Neville were made prisoners, and the former, under a menace of instant death, promised not to serve any more processes west of the mountains.

On the following day the insurgents sent word to Inspector Neville and the marshal, then in Pittsburgh, that they must instantly resign. They refused. The means for defence at Pittsburgh were small; and so complete and absolute was the despotism of *Tom the Tinker* that there were very few persons in all that region, out of the immediate family connections of General Neville, who were not active or passive insurgents. Loyalists were marked as enemies of their country—in other words, of their *district*—and taunted with being *submissionists*. Their allegiance to the Government of the United States was called a cowardly yielding to the *tyranny of Federal coercion*. The mails were seized and robbed; houses of the loyalists in all directions were burned, and the militia of the four rebellious counties were summoned to rendezvous at Braddock's Field, on the Monongahela, armed and equipped, and supplied with three days' provisions. Meanwhile the inspector and marshal had fled down the Ohio in an open boat to Marietta, and then made their way to Philadelphia through the wilderness.

The summons for the meeting of the militia on Braddock's Field, circulated for only three days over a sparsely settled country, drew together over seven thousand men. Some, as they afterwards alleged, went there



to gratify their curiosity, and a few, like Mr. Röss, the United States Senator, hastened to the field to restrain the people and prevent mischief. The prompt response of the masses delighted the leaders. They regarded it as a token of confidence in them and the earnestness of the people in the cause. Colonel Cook, one of the judges of Fayette County, was called to preside over the great meeting of armed citizens, and Albert Gallatin, who had lately been refused a seat in the Senate of the United States because of ineligibility, as shown by his naturalization papers, was appointed secretary. Bradford, "before whom everybody cringed," assumed the position of Major-General, and reviewed the troops. His design seems to have been to march upon Pittsburg, seize upon Fort Pitt and its arms and ammunition, and declare the counties west of the Alleghenies an independent State. He was one of the earliest avowed secessionists who appears in our history. But timid or more loyal militia officers refused to co-operate with him to that infamous extent. Brackenridge counselled against the measure, and the scheme was abandoned.

Emboldened by the formidable demonstration on Braddock's Field, the insurgent leaders expelled all the excise officers who remained. Some were brutally treated and their houses burned, even in districts where the opposition had hitherto been less violent. The insurgent spirit spread into the neighboring counties of Virginia, and the rebellion began to assume huge proportions.

A meeting had been held at Mingo Creek late in July, near where the chief insurgents resided, when it was agreed to hold a convention at Parkinson's Ferry, on the Monongahela, three weeks later. As the day for that convention approached matters assumed more threatening aspects. As in most rebellions, the measure of actual armed resistance to the execution of the national laws was advocated by only a few violent and reckless men. Of these Bradford was the chief. With a desperate few, armed by terrorism composed of threats and violence, he overawed the people, established an absolute despotism, and converted a whole community into a band of rebels, who, under wise and righteous counsellors, might have been loyal petitioners to a listening government for a redress of grievances.

When intelligence of these high-handed proceedings reached Philadelphia, the "Democratic societies"—the prototypes of the Knights of the Golden Circle of our day—were jubilant because of the late brilliant victories of the French arms. They had recovered from their depression caused by former reverses suffered by the French army, and the disgrace of Genet, and were now assailing the administration with unsparing malignity. The Philadelphia society did, indeed, pass a resolution which, after execrating the excise law in terms sufficient to give sustenance to the rebellion, disapproved of the violent acts of resistance. But President Washington had no faith in the sincerity of their leaders. He regarded them as artful and designing men, while the great body of the membership whom they controlled he believed meant well, and knew little of their real plans for sowing "among the people the seeds of jealousy and distrust of the Government by destroying all confidence in the administration of it." "I consider this insurrection," he wrote to Governor Lee of Virginia, in August, "as the first formidable fruit of the Democratic societies, brought forth, I believe, too prematurely for their own views, which may contribute to the annihilation of them."

The President called a cabinet council. All regarded the moment as a critical one for the republic. If the insurrection in Pennsylvania should not be immediately checked, like or similar causes might produce like effects in other parts of the republic. The example of the whiskey-makers might become infectious, and the very foundations of the State be shaken. It was agreed that forbearance must end, and the effective power of the executive arm must be put forth to suppress the rising rebellion. Accordingly, on the 7th of August, Washington issued a proclamation warning the insurgents to disperse, and declaring that if tranquillity should not be restored in the disturbed counties before the 1st of September, or in about twenty days, an armed force would be employed to compel submission to the laws. At the same time the President made a requisition on the governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia for militia sufficient to compose an army of thirteen thousand men. It was

estimated that the insurgent counties could raise sixteen thousand fighting men.

General Mifflin, a leading Democrat, who had taken an active part in the convivial meetings of his party when they welcomed Genet to Philadelphia, was then Governor of Pennsylvania. When the proposition of a majority of the Cabinet to call out the militia was suggested to him, he expressed a doubt of the expediency of the measure, as it might exasperate the rebels and increase the difficulty. He doubted his own authority to make such a call, and questioned whether the militia of his sovereign State would "pay a passive obedience to the mandates of the Government"—whether there would not be a divided Pennsylvania.

He wished to act independently of the General Government, believing that his State was able of itself to suppress insurrection within its borders, and to punish the offenders under the due course of State law. He was therefore disposed to content himself with an expression of official indignation, and the issuing of orders for the State officers in the West to use all their authority to suppress the tumults.

Randolph, the Democratic Attorney-General, coincided with Mifflin in his views. He expressed great fears that if the National Government should attempt *coercion* there would be civil war. Brackenridge had written a letter to a friend in Philadelphia, which had been sent to the Cabinet, doubtless for the purpose of intimidating it, in which he maintained that the Western counties were able to defend themselves, and suggested that the midland counties would not be disposed to *allow the march of national troops to the West over their sacred soil!* He also intimated that if *coercion* should be attempted, the insurgents might *make application to Great Britain for aid, and even march on Philadelphia*, the national capital.

Washington was not to be trifled with. He perceived the danger and the necessity for prompt action, and resolved to discard every semblance of a temporizing policy with the rebels. When Mifflin refused to call out the militia of his State, he took the responsibility on himself; and after making the necessary arrangements, by obtaining a certificate from a judge of the Supreme Court that in certain counties the execution of the laws of the United States was ob-

structed by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, he issued the proclamation and made the requisition already mentioned, and fixed the time for movement of the troops on the 1st of September.

The President resolved, however, to offer the insurgents the olive-branch before sending the sword. He appointed three commissioners to proceed to the insurgent district, and arrange, if possible, any time before the 14th of September, an effectual submission to the laws. Governor Mifflin appointed two commissioners to represent the State, and at the same time issued two proclamations, one for convening the Legislature, and the other calling upon the rebels to submit to the laws, assuring them that he should respond to the President's requisition for troops.

These commissioners went over the mountains together, and found the Convention already mentioned in session at Parkinson's Ferry. There were more than two hundred delegates present. The meeting was held in a grove upon the crown of a hill overlooking the Monongahela. Near by stood a tall pole bearing the words, in large letters, "LIBERTY AND NO EXCISE! NO ASYLUM FOR COWARDS AND TRAITORS!" Colonel Cook was Chairman, and Albert Gallatin was Secretary.

It was evident that those who evoked the storm were alarmed at its unexpected fury. Gallatin and Brackenridge had already perceived the folly and danger of their course, and the dilemma into which the people were plunged, and they were endeavoring by conciliatory measures to extricate them. Marshall had offered a resolution for the appointment of a committee of public safety, empowered "to call forth the resources of the western country to repel any hostile attempts against the citizens." Gallatin had boldly moved to refer the motion to a select committee, but quailing before the eye of Bradford, no one present dared second it. Marshall, already wavering, had finally offered to withdraw it, provided a committee of sixty be appointed with power to call another meeting. This was done, and a committee of fifteen were appointed to confer with the National and State commissioners. In all their proceedings no one dared to go so far as to agree to submit to the excise.

The commissioners and the committee of fifteen met a few days afterward at Pittsburgh. Marshall, Brackenridge, Cook, Gallatin, and Bradford, were of that committee. All but the latter were favorable to an accommodation. The commissioners demanded from the committee of sixty an explicit declaration of their determination to submit to the laws of the United States, and their recommendation to the citizens at large to do likewise; and also to abstain from all opposition, direct or indirect, and especially from violence or threats against the excise officers or the loyal distillers. The commissioners promised, on the part of the Government, in the event of a compliance with these requirements and perfect submission to the laws, a final pardon and oblivion of all offences. The committee of fifteen agreed that these terms were reasonable, and proceeded to call a meeting of the committee of sixty.

Bradford and his bad associates were dissatisfied. *Tom the Tinker* declared in the *Pittsburg Gazette*, that the conferees had been bribed by the Government, and an armed party assembled, when the sixty convened, to overawe them. Such would have been the effect but for the courage and address of Gallatin, seconded by Brackenridge. They urged submission; but Bradford, in a violent harangue, called upon the people to continue their resistance, and to form an independent State. Bad counsels finally prevailed, and the commissioners returned to the seat of Government without accomplishing the object of their mission.

On the day after the return of the commissioners (September 25) the President issued another proclamation, giving notice of the advance of the troops. Governor Henry Lee, of Virginia ("Legion Harry" of the Revolution), was appointed Commander-in-chief of the expedition. The Virginia troops were led by the veteran General Morgan, and those of Maryland by General Smith, then Member of Congress, from Baltimore. These, forming the left wing, assembled at Cumberland, thence to march across the mountains by Braddock's Road. Governors Mifflin and Howell led in person the respective troops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. These formed the right wing. They rendezvoused at Bedford, to cross the mountains by what was known as the north route.

There had been great and unexpected alacrity in the response to the President's call. A most gratifying manifestation of loyalty was exhibited on every hand. The citizens readily contributed means for the support of the wives and children of the volunteers during their absence; and the quota of each State, composed chiefly of volunteers, was promptly furnished.

It was soon evident that this military expedition was highly necessary. The insurgent spirit was rapidly spreading, and had appeared at Carlisle and other places east of the mountains. It was checked suddenly and effectually when the troops approached. Bradford and his associates, over-estimating the strength and disloyalty of the Democratic party, had laughed at the President's proclamation calling for troops. He did not believe that the people of the loyal portion of the country could be induced to appear in arms against their brethren who were, in imitation of their Revolutionary fathers, only seeking to establish their independence of the tyrannical National Government at Philadelphia, and asked for nothing more than to be *let alone*. They had resolved not to submit to a tariff on their staple production, nor allow the National Government to *coerce* them into submission to its laws; and it was an infringement of their sovereign rights as freeman, and a great public crime to inaugurate a civil war by sending troops to *subjugate* them.

But Bradford and his more violent associates were compelled to come down from their stilts. They were amazed when they heard that Democratic leaders, like Mifflin, were in arms against them; and when they learned that the troops were actually approaching the Eastern slope of the Alleghenies they fled from the country. Calmer thought and wiser counsels prevailed. A new convention was held at Parkinson's Ferry, when resolutions to submit were adopted. Findley, who had found it much easier to arouse the bad passions of men than to control them, and had mustered courage sufficient to place himself decidedly on the side of law and order, was despatched, with another, to meet the advancing troops with proffers of loyalty, and, if possible, to stay their progress.

The President and Secretary of the Treasury had accompanied the right wing of the army, and were at Carlisle when Findley and

his associate arrived there. Washington treated the penitent insurgents kindly, but they did not bring sufficient evidences of the loyalty of their constituents to cause him to countermand the order for the forward march of the troops. The alarmed ambassadors immediately turned back, crossed the mountains in great haste, and called another meeting at Parkinson Ferry. With fuller assurances of the absolute submission of the insurgents, Findley, recrossed the Alleghanies to stay the march of the national troops. The President had returned to Philadelphia, leaving Hamilton to act as his deputy. The Minister was not satisfied. He would not trust the professions of loyalty made by men so lately in rebellion. The troops moved steadily onward. They crossed the Alleghanies in a heavy rain-storm, encountering mud knee-deep in many places. The two wings of the army met at Uniontown, and proceeded together to the disaffected district. Lee made his head-quarters at Parkinson Ferry, and there issued a proclamation of offering conditional pardon and peace. The inhabitants were all required to take the oath of allegiance to the United States.

A few days after this proclamation was issued General Lee made a seizure of all persons supposed to have been criminally concerned in the late violent proceedings. The most guilty had fled from the country. Many were dismissed for want of evidence against them, and a considerable number were bound over for trial at Philadelphia. Only two were found guilty of capital offences, and sentenced to be hung—one for arson, the other for robbing the mail. There were palliating circumstances in their cases and the President finally pardoned them.

Most of the troops were soon withdrawn

from the country of the late rebels. Twenty-five hundred of them encamped in the district, under General Morgan, until spring, when every vestige of disloyalty had disappeared.

Thus terminated a rebellion engendered by politicians, which at one time threatened the stability, if not the very existence of the Republic. It was put down without the shedding of a drop of blood. This result was owing chiefly to the wisdom, prudence, vigilance, energy, and personal popularity of the President. He did not wait until the rebellion had assumed proportions too great to be managed with ease. He comprehended the magnitude of the threatened evil and his duty respecting it, and was fearless and energetic in the performance of that duty. The event, so ominous of dire calamity at one time, was overruled for the production of great good. The Government was amazingly strengthened by it. The national authority was fully vindicated; and the general rally to its support when the Chief sounded the bugle-call, even of those who had hitherto leaned toward or acted with the opposition, was a significant omen of future stability and power. Every honest man expressed his reprobation of the violent resistance to law, and the Democratic Societies the chief fomenters of the insurrection, showed a desire to be less conspicuous. Hamilton, who had always distrusted the strength of the Government in such an emergency, was now perfectly convinced of its inherent power, and both he and Washington regarded the affair as a fortunate circumstance for the nation. And thus it will ever be with this Republic; for its foundations are laid upon the the solid foundations of Truth and Justice.